

THE RADICAL.

MARCH, 1869.

PLATO.

A CONVERSATION. BY A. BRONSON ALCOTT.*

WE deal this evening with a human subject, and I venture to read some brief notes as the thread of the conversation which we hope will follow. I shall take it as a favor to receive a hint if I read too long, as I value the conversation even more than the reading; and if the company will be kind enough as I read, if any point interests them, to remember it, and, after the reading, put their questions, we will try to speak to these.

NOTES ON PLATO.

Born B. C. 429. Died 348.

It was a common speech among the Athenians, that Apollo begat Æsculapius and Plato,—the one to cure bodies, the other, souls. Certainly the last was of divine extraction; his life and thoughts fruitful in genius and immortality. Like all superior persons, his birth is traced to a divine ancestry, and dignified with fables. His mother, Perictione, was a descendant of Solon, and a woman of extraordinary beauty. Aristo, his father, was of

* Reported for THE RADICAL by B. F. Yerrington.

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an eminent family. To him Apollo appeared in a dream, enjoining upon him respect for his wife's maternity; and, in accordance with the vision, it was affirmed, —

"He did not issue from a mortal bed;
A god his sire, a godlike life he led."

Whilst he was yet an infant, carried in his mother's arms, Aristo went to Hymettus to sacrifice to the Muses, taking his wife and child with him. As they were busied in the divine rites, she laid the babe in a thicket of myrtles hard by, to whom, as he slept, came a swarm of bees, artists of Hymettian honey, flying and buzzing about him, and (so runs the myth) made a honeycomb in his mouth, — this being a presage of the singular sweetness of his future eloquence foreseen in infancy.

As things fall out, not by chance, but by divine ordination, and are intimated in advance, for the most part, so Socrates, who was to win the noblest of the Athenian youths for his pupil and disciple, dreamed, the night before Plato was commended to him, that a young swan fled from Cupid's altar in the Academy, and sat upon his lap, thence flew up to heaven, delighting both gods and men with its music. Next day, as he was relating this to some of his friends, Aristo came to him, and presented his son Plato to be his pupil. As soon as Socrates saw him, reading in his looks his ingenuity, "Friends," said he, "this is the swan of Cupid's Academy."

Whilst a child, he was remarkable for his sharpness of apprehension, and the admirable modesty of his disposition; the beginnings of his youth being seasoned with labor and love of study, which virtues increased and harmonized with all others when he came to man's estate. He early learned the art of wrestling, and became so great a proficient that he took part in the Isthmian and Pythian games. As in years and virtue, so likewise he increased extraordinarily in bodily proportion and shape, insomuch that Aristo named him Plato, which implies breadth of shoulders and bold eloquence. He also studied painting and poetry, writing epics after the manner of Homer; but, finding how far he fell short of him, he committed them to

the flames. Intending to contest for the palm at the Olympic Theatre, he wrote some dramatic pieces, and gave them to the players, to be performed at the festivals. But the day before these were to have been presented, chancing to hear Socrates discourse in the theatre before the Bacchanals, he was so taken with him that he not only forbore to contest at the time, but wholly gave over all tragic poetry, and burned his verses. From that time, being then in his twentieth year, he became a follower of Socrates, and studied philosophy.

He studied eight years with Socrates, committing, as was the custom with his scholars, the substance of his master's discourses to writing. Of these were some of his Dialogues afterwards composed, with such additions of argument and ornament that Socrates, hearing him recite his *Lysis*, exclaimed, "O Hercules! how many things this young man fables of me!"

He was one of the youngest of the Senate at the time of Socrates' arraignment. The judges being much displeased with Socrates, Plato took the orator's chair, intending to plead in his master's defence, beginning, "Though I, Athenians, am the youngest of those that come to this place," — but, as all the Senate were against his speaking, he was constrained to leave the chair. Socrates being condemned, Plato offered to obtain the money for purchasing his liberty, which Socrates refused. Upon the death of Socrates, Plato, — whose excessive grief is mentioned by Plutarch, — with others of his disciples, fearing the tyranny of those who put their master to death, fled to Euclid at Megara, who befriended and entertained them till the storm was blown over. He afterwards traveled in Italy, where he addicted himself to the discipline of Pythagoras, which, though he saw it replenished with curious and high reason, yet he chiefly affected the continence and chastity, along with the knowledge of nature, possessed by that school.

Desiring to add to the knowledge of the Pythagoreans the benefits of other disciplines, he went to Cyrene to learn geometry of Theodorus, the mathematician; thence into Egypt, under pretence of selling oil, — the scope of his journey thither being to bring the knowledge of astrology from thence, and to be instructed in the rites of the prophets and the mysteries. Hav-

ing taken a full survey of the country, he settled himself at Sais, learning of the school of wise men there the doctrines of the universe, the immortality of the soul, and its transmigrations. From Egypt he returned to Tarentum in Italy, where he conversed with Archytas the elder, and other Pythagoreans, adding to the learning of Socrates that of Pythagoras. He would have gone also to India to study with the Magi, but the wars then raging in Asia prevented. While in Egypt he probably became familiar with the opinions of Hermes Trismegistus. That he also received some light from Moses is probable, since his Laws were translated into Greek before Alexander's time, and Josephus, the Jew, affirms, "that he chiefly followed our Lawgiver." And Numenius asks, "Of philosophers, what is Plato but Moses speaking Greek?" It is known that he brought from Sicily, where he went thrice, at the invitation of Dionysius the younger, the three books of Philolaus, the Pythagorean, on natural philosophy, the first that were published out of that school. These he doubtless wove into his dialogue entitled "Timeus." Timeon accuses him of this appropriation.

" You Plato with the same affection caught
With a great sum, a little treatise bought,
Where all the knowledge which you own was taught," —

Alluding to his having received of Dionysius above eighty talents, and being flush with his money.

He is said to owe much to Protagoras, and wrote a dialogue under that title. In politics, as in morals, he drew largely from the opinions of his master, Socrates; and it is related that he was indebted to the books of Sophron, which, having been long neglected, were by him first brought to Athens, and found under his pillow at his death. Certainly he, of all scholars, had the best right to borrow, since none could recognize his own in his pages, and any author might glory in being esteemed worthy of lending a syllable to so consummate a creator.

On returning to Athens from his Egyptian travels, he settled himself in the Academy, a gymnasium, or place of exercise, in the suburbs of the city, surrounded by woods, and taking its name from Academus, one of the heroes.

"The fluent, sweet-tongued sage first led the way,
Who writes as smoothly as from some green spray
Of Academe grasshoppers chirp their lay."

The occasion of his living here was that he owned an orchard adjoining the Academy. In process of time, this orchard was much enlarged by good-will, studious persons bequeathing of their riches to the professors of philosophy, to maintain the quiet and tranquillity of a philosophical life. Here he first taught philosophy; afterwards in the Gardens of Colonus. At the entrance of his school was written,—

"Let none ignorant of geometry enter here;"

Signifying, by this inscription, not only the proportion and harmony of lines, but also of inward affections and ideas.

His school took the name of the Academy. He thought it was a great matter, in the education of youth, to accustom them to take delight in good things; otherwise, he affirmed, pleasures were the bait of evil. Education should be conducted with a serene sweetness, never by force or violence, but by gentleness, accompanied with persuasion and every kind of invitation. His teaching was conducted by conversation or dialogue. His method of discourse was threefold,—first, to declare what that is which is taught; then, for what reason it is asserted, whether as a principal cause, or as a comparison, and whether to defend the tenet, or controvert it; thirdly, whether it be rightly said. He expounded the things which he conceived to be true; confuted those which were false; suspended his opinions on those which were doubtful.

His philosophy comprised the elements of the school of Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates, combined in a system which he distributed into three parts,—moral, consisting of action; natural, in contemplation; rational, in distinction of true and false, which, though useful in all, yet belongs to pure thought. As of old, in a tragedy the chorus acted alone; then Thespis, making some intermissions of the chorus, introduced one actor, Æschylus a second, Sophocles a third. In like manner, philosophy was

at first but of one kind,—physic; then Socrates added ethic; thirdly, Plato, inventing dialectic, made it perfect.

This third part, dialectic, consisting in reason and dissertation, he treated thus: Though judgments arise from the sense, yet the judgment of truth is not in the senses. The mind alone is the judge of things, and only fit to be credited, because the mind alone sees that which is simple, uniform, and certain, which is named idea. All sense he conceived to be obtuse and slow, and nowise able to perceive those things which seem subject to sense; those things being so minute that they cannot fall under sense; so movable and various, that nothing is one, constant and the same; all are in continual alteration and movement, and subjects of opinion only. Science he affirmed to be nowhere but in the reasons and thoughts of the mind, whose objects are ideas, whence he approved definitions of things, and applied these to whatsoever subject he discussed, discriminating things and naming them etymologically. In this consisted the discipline of dialectic; that is, of speech concluded by reason. Though Socrates practiced conversation by way of question and answer, or dialogue, yet Plato so much refined the form, both in speech and composition, that he deserves to be preferred before others, as well for invention as reformation. The analytical method, which reduces the thing sought into its principle, is his invention.

Several words were also introduced by him in philosophy. Of these are "element," which before his time was confounded with "principle." He distinguished them thus: "Principle is that which has nothing before it whereof it might be generated: elements are compounded." The word "poem" was first used by him. So were "superficies" and "antipodes." "Divine providence," a word since appropriated by Christian theologians, was first an expression of Plato's. He too first considered the force and efficacy of grammar as the organ of pure thought.

His school was the pride of Athens, and drew into it its most gifted youth, as well as scholars from abroad. His most distinguished disciples were Speusippus, his nephew, whom he reformed by his example and teachings, and who became eminent as a philosopher, succeeding him in the Academy; Xenocrates,

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whom he much loved ; Aristotle, the Stagirite, whom Plato used to call a wild colt, foreseeing that he would oppose him in his philosophy, as a colt, having sucked, kicks its dam. Xenocrates was slow, Aristotle quick, in extremity ; whence Plato said of them, "See what an unequal team this of mine. What an ass and horse to yoke together !"

Isocrates the orator, and Demosthenes, were among his auditors ; Dion of Syracuse was an intimate friend of his, and by whose persuasions he made two journeys to Syracuse, at one of which he was sold into slavery by the tyranny of Dionysius, and being redeemed by his friend, returned to Athens, as is related by Plutarch. Xenophon was his contemporary.

At home he lived quietly in the Academy, not taking part in public affairs, the laws and customs of the Athenians not being in harmony with his ideas of republican institutions. "Princes," he said, "had no better possessions than the familiarity of such men as could not flatter, wisdom being as necessary to a prince as the soul to the body ; and that kingdoms would be most happy if either philosophers ruled, or the rulers were inspired with philosophy, since nothing is more pernicious than power and arrogance accompanied with ignorance. Subjects should be such as princes seem to be." And he held that a philosopher might retire from the commonwealth if its affairs were unjustly administered. "A just man was a perpetual magistrate."

He affirmed that philosophy was the true helper of the soul, all else but ornamental ; that nothing is more pleasing to a sound mind than to speak and hear the truth spoken, than which nothing is better or more lasting.

The study of philosophy, if it made him select in the choice of his associates, did not sour his temper, nor render him exclusive in his intercourse and fellowship with mankind. At the Olympian games, he once fell into company with some strangers who did not know him, upon whose affections he gained greatly by his affable conversation, dining and spending the day with them, never mentioning either the Academy or Socrates, only saying his name was Plato. When they came to Athens, he entertained them courteously. "Come, Plato," said the strangers, "now show us your namesake, Socrates' disciple. Take us

to the Academy : recommend us to him, that we may know him." He, smiling a little, as he used, said, "I am the man." Whereat they were greatly amazed, having conversed so familiarly with a person of that eminence, who used no boasting or ostentation, and showed that, besides his philosophical discourse, his ordinary conversation was extremely winning.

He lived single, yet soberly and chastily. So constant was he in his composure and gravity, that a youth brought up under him, returning to his parents, and hearing his father speak vehemently and loudly, said, "I never found this in Plato." He ate but once a day, or, if the second time, very sparingly, abstaining mostly from animal food. He slept alone, and much discommended the contrary practice.

Of his prudence, patience, moderation, and magnanimity, and other virtues, there are many instances recorded. When he left his school, he was wont to say, "See, youths, that you employ your idle hours usefully. Prefer labor before idleness, unless you esteem rust above brightness."

To Philedonus, who blamed him that he was as studious to earn as teach, and asked him how long he meant to be a disciple, he replied, "As long as I am not ashamed of growing better and wiser."

Being asked what difference there was between a learned man and unlearned, — "The same as betwixt a physician and patient."

To Antisthenes, making a long oration, — "You forget that discourse is to be measured by the hearer, not the speaker."

Hearing a vicious person speak in defence of another, — "This man," said he, "carries his heart in his tongue." He blamed having musicians at feasts, "to hinder discourse."

Seeing the Agregentines so magnificent in building, and luxurious in feasting, — "These people," said he, "build as if they were immortal, and eat as if they were to die instantly."

He advised "drunken and angry men to look in the glass if they would refrain from those vices," and Xenocrates, by reason of his severe countenance, "to sacrifice to the Graces."

Being desirous to wean Timotheus, the son of Canon, the Athenian general, from sumptuous military feasts, he invited him into the Academy to a plain moderate supper, such as pleasing

sleep succeeds in a good temper of body. The next day, Timotheus, observing the difference, said, "They who feasted with Plato never complained the next morning."

His servant having displeased him for some offense, he said to him, "Were I not angry, I should chastise you for it." At another time, his servant being found faulty, he had him lay off his coat; and, while he stood with his hand raised, a friend coming in asked him what he was doing. "Punishing an angry man," said he. It was a saying of his, that "no wise man punishes in respect of past faults, but for preventing future ones."

On being told that some one spoke ill of him, he answered, "No matter: I will live so that none shall believe him." When asked whether there should be any record left to posterity of his actions or sayings, — "First," said he, "we must get a name, then many things follow."

Continuing a single life to his end, and not having any heirs of his own, he bequeathed his estate to his nephew, young Adimantus, the son of Adimantus his second brother. Besides his orchard and grounds inherited or added by purchase, he left to him "three mina of silver, a golden cup, and a finger and ear rings of gold. The gold ear-ring was one he wore when a boy, as a badge of his nobility; and the golden cup was one of sacrifice. He left to his servants, Ticho, Bictus, and Apolloniades, Dionysius' goods." He "owed no man anything."

He died on his eighty-first birthday, for which reason the Magi at Athens sacrificed to him as conceiving him to have been more than man, and as having fulfilled the most perfect number, nine multiplied into itself. He died of old age; which Seneca ascribes to his temperance and diligence.

This, among other epitaphs, was inscribed on his tombstone:—

"Earth in her bosom Plato's body hides:
His soul amongst the deathless gods resides.
Aristo's son, whose fame to strangers spread,
Made them admire the sacred life he led."

Plutarch tells that Solor began the story of the Atlantides, which he had learned of the priests of Sais, but gave it over on account of his old age and the largeness of the work. He adds

that "Plato, taking the same argument as a waste piece of fertile ground fallen to him by hereditary right, manured, refined, and inclosed it with large walls, porches, and galleries, such as never any fable had before; but he too, undertaking it late, died before completing it. 'The more things written delight us, the more they disappoint us,' he remarks, 'when not finished.' For as the Athenian city left the temple of Jupiter, so Plato's wisdom, amongst many writings, left the Atlantides alone imperfect."

The order in which his dialogues were written is yet a question of dispute with scholars. It is conceded, however, that the "Republic" and the "Laws" were completed, if not wholly written, in his old age. Nor is the number of his dialogues accurately determined. Some attributed to him are supposed to be spurious, as are some of the letters. All are contained in Bohn's edition of the works of Plato, and accessible in scholarly translations to the English reader.*

Of the great minds of antiquity, Plato stands pre-eminent in breadth and beauty of speculation. His books are the most suggestive, sensible, the friendliest, and, one may say, most modern of books. And it almost atones for any poverty of thought

* Among the works deserving of a wider circulation is Thomas Stanley's "History of Philosophy." It well repays perusal, compiled as it was by an enthusiastic student of ancient thought, from reliable sources, and embodying, in an attractive style, "the lives, opinions, actions, and discourses of the philosophers of every sect, illustrated with portraits of many of them. Third edition. Folio, pp. 750. London, 1701." "The preceding notes are mostly extracted from this history.

"It might be thought serious trifling," says the accomplished Bishop Berkeley, "to tell my readers that the greatest of men had ever a high esteem of Plato, whose writings are the touchstone of a hasty and shallow mind, whose philosophy has been the admiration of ages; which supplied patriots, magistrates, and lawgivers to the most flourishing states, as well as fathers of the church and doctors of the schools. Albeit, in these days, the depths of that old learning are rarely fathomed. And yet it were happy for these lands if our young nobility and gentry, instead of modern maxims, would imbibe the notions of the great men of antiquity. But in these loose times many an empty head is shook at Aristotle and Plato, as well as at the Holy Scriptures. Certainly, where a people are well educated, the art of piloting a state is best learned from the writings of Plato."

in our time, this admission to a mind thus opulent in the grandeur and graces of intelligence, giving one a sense of his debt to genius and letters. His works are a cosmos, as Pythagoras named the world. And one rises from their perusal as if returned from a circumnavigation of the globe of knowledge, human and divine. So capacious was his genius, so comprehensive, so inclusive, so subtle, and so versatile, withal, that he readily absorbed the learning of his time, moulding this into a body of beauty and harmony compact; working out, with the skill and completeness of a creator, the perfect whole we see. His erudition was commensurate with his genius, and he the sole master of his tools; since in him we have an example, as successful as it was daring, of an endeavor to animate and give individuality to his age in the persons whose ideas gave birth to the age itself. And fortunate it was for him, as for his readers, that he had before him a living illustration of his time in the person of the chief character in his dialogues, Socrates himself.

Of these dialogues, the "Republic" is the most celebrated, embodying his ripest knowledge. It fables a city planted in the divine ideas of truth and justice as these are symbolized in human forms and natural things. And one reads with emotions of surprise at finding so much of sense and wisdom embodied in a form so fair, and of such wide application, as if it were suited to all peoples and times. Where in philosophic literature is found a structure of thought so firmly fixed on natural foundations, and placing beyond cavil or question the supremacy of mind over matter, portraying so vividly the passage of ideas through the world, and thus delivering down a divine order of society to mankind?*

In reading his works, one must have the secret of his method. Written, as these are, in the simplest style of composition, his reader may sometimes weary of the slow progress of the argument, and lose himself in the devious windings of the dialogue,

* If his "Republic" and "Laws" hardly justify him against those who accused him of having written a form of government which he could persuade none to practice, it may be said, in his favor, that he gave laws to the Syracusians and Cretans, refusing to like to the Ayreniens and Thebans, saying "it was difficult to prescribe laws to men in prosperity."

But this is the sole subtraction from the pleasure of perusal, — the voluminous sacrifices thus made to method: so much given to compliment, to dullness, in the interlinked threads of the golden colloquy. Yet Plato rewards as none other; his regal text is everywhere charged with lively sense, flashing in every line, every epithet, episode, with the rubies and pearls of universal wisdom. And the reading is a coronation.

There are so many points in his fifty or more dialogues inviting our attention, that we wait for inquiries upon any which the reading of these notes may have suggested, — Plato's method, Plato's dialectics, Plato's doctrine of ideas, Plato's doctrine of immortality, of the transmigration of souls, Plato's theory of the state, the republic, woman's place in it. We are but just beginning to discuss questions which Plato entertained long ago. He gave to the women the same chances as to the men; like education, equal advantages and rights in the state; an infant school besides, wherein the babes were committed to the care of cultivated persons, — the books to be examined by a committee before the little ones were to see a picture or hear a sentence. In his ideal republic, the women, having first discharged their duties in giving citizens to the state, were to take their place beside the men as its rulers; thus representing the interests of the whole republic. Then see Plato, living a little after Pericles, in the very flower and prime of Athenian culture, taking upon himself the charge of the best young men and women, educating them to be rulers, warriors, poets, legislators, — the finest mind in all Greece educating the finest minds in all Greece. Consider, too, how careful he was that babes were chastely introduced into the state; not leaving this matter to chance, — from twenty-five to forty-five for women, from thirty to fifty-five for men, the period for children to be born into the state, — not earlier, not later, nor by all, — bachelors to pay their fine, and lose their vote. If social vices, unlike ours, prevailed in his time, he met these at the beginning. And if he played Providence rather boldly, was this so much worse than the lack of all Providence in our time? His theories of population may be

commended to the study of civilians of our time, to heads of families especially, and to young men.

A GENTLEMAN. What were Plato's views of transmigration?

MR. ALCOTT. I should imagine the transmigrations were too familiar to most to detain us long in the metaphysics of that matter. Plato taught what all his predecessors had taught, that one life pervades all things, takes its residence in all forms; is a unity, the force of all forces, if we translate his doctrine into the language of modern science. But, dropping the science, 'tis a pretty fable to play with. I fancy most undergo many metamorphoses every day, are transformed into shapes they care not to see. One would think the fact of transmigration too familiar to remain a mere theory ten minutes. It might seem too personal to affirm that twenty-four hours' observation in any ordinary household would furnish an illustration of it. If celestials and infernals exhibit their whole company, contriving somehow to reveal themselves in the human countenance, the voice, attitudes, manners, souls possessing obsessing bodies, that would lead us into a field which the Spiritualists are cultivating; but it were a poor comment on Plato to call this Platonism. 'Tis Preternaturalism, and so far good as it liberates from sensualism and its abysses. It seems the old questions which Plato treats in his books re-appear to be discussed anew, — doctrines of nature, doctrines of mind, of society, life, religion. Take the names of some of his dialogues, — the "Apology of Socrates;" the "Phædo," illustrating the doctrine of immortality; the "Symposion," or social delights; the "Parmenides," or doctrine of the One, which the sects, with their trinities and unities, personal or impersonal, have not yet fathomed; the "Timæus," where he speaks of nature and the origin of man; the "Phædrus," for youth to study.

A GENTLEMAN. Do you think it makes any difference in regard to the Oneness as a personality, or as a thing?

MR. ALCOTT. I don't see how I could worship a thing.

SAME GENTLEMAN. The thing?

MR. ALCOTT. No: nor *the* thing, nor the thought. I don't see how I could worship a law; I don't see how I could worship a principle; I don't see how I could worship an idea. I do see

how I can worship The Person who contains them all, out of which all flow.

SAME GENTLEMAN. You think worship is necessary then?

MR. ALCOTT. Not only necessary, but essential. There was never a soul that did not worship: the very essence and life of the soul is worship. The babe, according to its capacity, worships the fair face that looks upon it, and the orb from which it takes its nourishment.

A GENTLEMAN. I mean something higher than love.

MR. ALCOTT. It is love itself, divine love, — pure instinct, not lustful.

SAME GENTLEMAN. If you call that worship, I mean the same thing.

MR. ALCOTT. We are on fine themes, and time is precious. The deeper we descend, the better. The Deity is fathomless, the Soul is deep; and he likes to have us see if we can sound his depths. "Find me out," he says, "if you can."

A GENTLEMAN. Some of my neighbors here are inquiring on what ground or principle Plato based his belief in reminiscence or pre-existence. What led him to that thought?

MR. ALCOTT. It is not Plato's alone: he borrowed it from Egypt or the East, and incorporated it into his doctrine as an unquestionable truth. And if any one can remember when he did not remember himself, then must he be left to question and reason it out as he may; but if none remembers when he did not remember, then 't is plain there is memory in him which he has not sounded, and that he is older than he knows. If his grandmother insists she knows his age, and has marked it in the family register, grandmother may be pardoned her delightful superstition about her grandchild's origin, even when present at its bodily advent. My impression is, that the baby is as old as his grandmother; not that baby descends into time and takes its body in the same period of the world. Hers is good history, correct chronology, important to family folk in their senses; but as soon as these transcend their senses by thought, they find themselves, baby and all, older than they can tell.

A GENTLEMAN. Did not he base it upon the fact that we have intuition? that we can compare the ideas we receive con-

sciously, through the senses, with intuitions that come we know not whence or where?

MR. ALCOTT. If Plato were to speak, he might say it is because we contain all things, are older than all things visible, that we date all visible things; that because we preceded time and space, therefore can we translate ourselves out of time and space, and look down upon our mortality. Why should it not be so? Why not have a perspective opening behind us into eternity as one opening before us? Why should not the Godhead reveal himself through the retrospect of memory, as the prospects of imagination; the recollections, as the instincts of faith and hope? If the soul is not older than its body, it cannot be proved that it will survive the body. So the fathers of the church believed, asserting, that, unless you can prove its pre-existence, you have no evidence that it may not decay; for if the soul be an atom, a body of atoms, matter only, mere perishable stuff, then what evidence is there it shall not dissolve? But if every atom of matter is animated and immanent with the latent Godhead, God embracing, embosoming everything, not putting his souls into bodies, but generating bodies through souls, then are we immortal as himself. We have the seed of immortality within us. If this is assertion, it needs must be assertion. Whoever needs other proof—so Plato taught, so Christ—has none. Whoever hopes to prove his immortality by logic, by miracle, fails. The proof transcends understanding; cannot be proved by one faculty: it needs the consent of all.

A GENTLEMAN. Do you call reason a faculty?

MR. ALCOTT. A faculty,—a personal gift of the Godhead himself. I don't say itself, because I cannot worship an *it*. Do I call my friend, "My dear *it*," "My lovely *it*"? No: but *him*, or *her*, addressing them as persons.

SAME GENTLEMAN. You might ask a philosopher if a triangle were blue or red.

MR. ALCOTT. Blue and red change when you look at them. Besides, there never was a perfect triangle, save in thought.

A GENTLEMAN. We can conceive whether it should be one or the other.

MR. ALCOTT. But that belongs not to the world of friendship,

religion, or worship. It belongs to the colder world of thought. We can imagine a triangle, but it must be an ideal triangle. There are neither triangles nor circles in nature: the senses never saw a perfect circle, nor perfect triangle, these existing only in idea, as Plato taught, as all things else in type or pattern. So the world pre-existed in the conception of God, and is born out of him, because he is a living, creative God, not a ghost. Matter is ghostly; and I observe those who believe so firmly in it are ever haunting its sepulchres, sad, solitary souls, dead burying the dead, and ghosts, of course. — See how we wander widely from our notes into wonderful transmigrations.

A GENTLEMAN. Do I understand you to say that the evidence of pre-existence is of the same kind as that of future existence?

MR. ALCOTT. I don't see the difference. We must escape from time and space, to conceive of soul.

SAME GENTLEMAN. My ideas may be gross, but I can have no conception of an immortality that is worth anything that does not carry with it identity.

MR. ALCOTT. Certainly not; and we supposed, when speaking thus emphatically of personality, that we were making that obvious.

SAME GENTLEMAN. But we bring from our past existence no consciousness of identity.

MR. ALCOTT. Does not the being persons, and being immortal, constitute that identity?

SAME GENTLEMAN. But an identity that is not a conscious one is worthless.

MR. ALCOTT. It becomes conscious as fast as our faculties begin to serve us fairly, and recover it for us; for what is the sense of immortality, but the revival in our memories of the personality out of which we cannot pass? 'T is true, we can generalize from one sensuous fact to another, and attain to some probability that we are immortal; but can we attain the certainty of our immortality if taken upon the mere assertion of any one, human or divine? Every one uses the word "eternity," implying that he means something by it: he uses a phrase implying something antecedent to time and his body. By what right does he so use it, if his conception of eternity cannot come from his brief

experience? Time can never prove eternity, nor explain it. Time is but an image of it, not it. But to one unaccustomed to speculations like this, to one predicating his judgment upon the senses merely, a demonstration either of a past or future immortality were impossible. Yet here is just where Christendom, the most advanced sects in Christendom, are to-day. They say, "We don't understand how this is: we believe there was a Person once who died, and after three days re-appeared; there was a little interval when he must have been somewhere, and, therefore, we hope we too may survive the body." That is taking all upon trust. Need a person die, to know what death is? Every one who thinks deeply, loves divinely, passes out of his flesh, is no longer a resident in it; but if the soul has never consciously thought itself out of its organs, it has no evidence of its immortality. 'T is the want of deep, true, faithful thinking.

A GENTLEMAN. When you get into that depth, do you suppose we lose ourselves as we are lost here?

MR. ALCOTT. We find ourselves just as we pass into the life of more thought.

SAME GENTLEMAN. Find the Deity; but dowe find what we call ourselves?

MR. ALCOTT. We are not ourselves save as we think out ourselves. The Deity is always with us: he is in the depth of us. /We are to fathom the depths and find him out. / We imagine, when we say "find out," that he is the resident of some distant orb. If anywhere, is he not in that part of us which we call most divine,—the Personal mind or self, the Soul of our soul? And whoever does not thus find him here, feel him, know, and become one with him, has but a tradition, a mere apparition of him, or of himself.

A GENTLEMAN. When we find this Deity, shall we remember this conversation on Plato?

MR. ALCOTT. Everything that has once been personally ours becomes part of us, and remains: the mere incidents, the sensuous facts, appearances, may not remain.

SAME GENTLEMAN. Is that the way we lose the past?

MR. ALCOTT. That is the way we lose the past and ourselves.

It is not necessary we should remember what we did in this particular or that. Can this little sphere, confining us round and round, furnish us with symbols adequate to show us all we were and are? Let each affirm, at once and divinely, "I pre-existed in the Godhead himself: I was, but not in the body I am in now. I was, and am, and shall ever abide in his essence; have never passed, nor can pass out of it wholly. If I fancy I have passed out of it, that is death and delusion only. It is because we imagine ourselves out of him, that we go fumbling after him afar.

A GENTLEMAN. A gentleman of Cambridge, who wrote a book on annihilation, argued to me that our immortality was continued only by virtue of our continually re-creating ourselves; and that many, ceasing to do that, to create themselves anew, lose themselves.

MR. ALCOTT. Let us affirm divinely that love is creative, and only those who love divinely create and continue consciously. No soul can perish. It may think it is dead, but it cannot die: 'tis because some of its gifts slumber. Can one say, I am dead, unless there is a spark of life in him to affirm his decease? You must affirm life to affirm death. Therefore, this question of pre-existence troubles and confuses because we perpetually confront our future, and not our past, existence, — as if there was nothing of us until we appeared. The doctrine of the descent of souls, the Platonic as the Christian doctrine, declares that souls descend from the Godhead, from the One, and take material bodies. The Christian Church accepts that; affirms one Soul, at least, descended, took human form, and re-ascended; and on that fact, historically taken, not experimentally known, Christendom stands to-day. Suppose all souls had the like evidence claimed for him, — would there be less Christianity? More: it would be Christianity regained, faith made experience. The more conscious of the Divinity, the more personal we become. God is the Person. The more we put off our individuality, that which constitutes us bodies, do we see ourselves as persons, as everlasting, and that time cannot date us.

A GENTLEMAN. Is not that a sufficient answer to —'s inquiry, in which I think there was much force, whether there

can be true immortality without to each individual a consciousness that he has, in and for himself, a continued existence separate from any other?

MR. ALCOTT. Individually separate, but personally one, as Christ said. And this must be said in the case of every inquirer. The sense of immortality must be developed in us. The proof is from within: we have none if it is not. Because all our faculties must be unfolded in harmony, — the memory, the understanding, the imagination, the reason, the moral sense, the will, — and when the whole mind becomes quick, then the person affirms itself. If one's memory is confined to material images of visible things, what evidence has he? None, simply because he has not thought in that direction: his material philosophy has engrossed him, not the idealism of Plato, who affirmed that God first shapes all things in his own ideal. Herein is the creation. He imparts to all souls the power to re-shape their bodies, and so the world comes into form.

A GENTLEMAN. Does that consciousness limit itself to merely the material element of being?

MR. ALCOTT. Which?

SAME GENTLEMAN. You speak disparagingly of this consciousness of matter as a part or representative of personality. Need the consciousness of the individual necessarily be limited?

MR. ALCOTT. A person must eliminate all matter from his thought to find himself, — eliminate matter, and be where matter no longer is. That is the new birth.

SAME GENTLEMAN. Is the true self separate?

MR. ALCOTT. To find himself separate from his body, and to know that he was before he had a body, and will be himself after this garment has been cast aside, —

SAME GENTLEMAN. But not independent of his personality?

MR. ALCOTT. That is his personality.

SAME GENTLEMAN. The body?

MR. ALCOTT. No: his soul *is* his personality.

SAME GENTLEMAN. I can only repeat the question I asked before. You say that a portion of the divine essence once left its source, came to earth, took possession of a body here, and then returned; but it brought its personality with it, and carried its personality back with it.

MR. ALCOTT. You allude to Christ. I did not mean to imply my faith in the popular notions. All our lives are a returning. Yet we never shall return entirely; since, if we did, we should be God himself. Personally we live in the infinitive mood, present tense; are herein proceeding forth and returning. The Deity, by the very activity of his Godhead, ever creates in his own image, and our souls are those creations, pulse by pulse.

SAME GENTLEMAN. No matter whether it returned or not. This spark of the divine essence took a certain form, and brought to earth its personality. Now, a similar spark of the divine essence has taken this form of mine; but the trouble with me is, where is the evidence of the personality which accompanied that spark of the divine essence, of which I now have no consciousness?

MR. ALCOTT. I may not speak to your inquiry as you would wish. I conceive God to be the Perfect Person, creating ever in his own image personal souls partaking of all his attributes in kind, only less in degree. Their personality is their life, their identity. It cannot be lost. It may be obscured, but cannot be blotted out of our consciousness.

A LADY. Will you tell us what Plato meant by saying that the rulers of his ideal republic should have their wives in common, and the children should be brought up so?

MR. ALCOTT. That is a very proper question for one of your sex to ask. Plato held that those powers which preside at the origination of a human being were, by virtue of their privilege, to originate only pure and perfect beings; and he made the rite a sacrament, not at every one's option, but of persons elected to preside over those rites. Only those who had acquitted themselves as superior in courage, virtue, nobility of soul, were entitled to add citizens to the state. His rule, instead of being common or loose, was so strict that ours seems adultery in comparison. I should think that would satisfy any woman.

SAME GENTLEMAN. I hoped you would tell us a little more about the political and civil organization of Plato's Republic. That is a little more in my line than what I have been hearing.

MR. ALCOTT. The conversation has run into the depths of metaphysical mysteries; but I am here to follow, as well as lead.

The Republic is a prolific theme. We have but intimated some of its details. It was a system of education. Plato aimed — and it was his first aim — that the new beings should be taken from the beginning, and carefully guarded and cultivated to become superior men and women: he proposed for his time what we have not yet dreamed of in ours.

SAME GENTLEMAN. Did he apply that education to the privileged class?

MR. ALCOTT. He defined classes —

SAME GENTLEMAN. Did he not confine it to the privileged classes only?

MR. ALCOTT. We could hardly call his rule democratic in our modern sense. There was one class of citizens, called artisans, who were to support the warriors and rulers, they being protected by the rulers and warriors, but taking no active part in the rule of the commonwealth, yet entitled to come into the commonwealth as they became cultivated.

SAME GENTLEMAN. As to the early education, — how was it about that? I understand they could pass from one class to another, — from the governed to the governing or fighting classes: were they entitled to the same training in early life? They were slaves, I understand.

MR. ALCOTT. Only foreigners were enslaved; nor were these slaves in our sense of the word. Some of the philosophers themselves were slaves: Plato was once sold as a slave.

SAME GENTLEMAN. Did he make any provision for educating the working class?

MR. ALCOTT. In a sense he did. Every citizen, no matter what his occupation, was entitled to go to the theatre at the state's expense.

SAME GENTLEMAN. But the infants of the slaves were not taken, as the infants of the privileged class, charge of by the government?

MR. ALCOTT. There were doubtless distinctions of that sort; yet all citizens were supposed to be under the supervision of the rulers, and none were to be uncared for. The distinction was according to culture, not according to condition. Birth was determined by the genius and qualities of the new-born. To be

well-born did not mean to be of aristocratic descent necessarily, but nobly originated to bring superior gifts into the community. Of course such views are an idealism; something strange to republicans of our time.

A GENTLEMAN. Did he undertake to determine the quality of children, — what could be expected of them?

MR. ALCOTT. Yes: that was actually proposed, and (we must say it) all monstrous or deformed babes were not to be reported in the census. A committee of women were to sit at the arrival of a new being, and pronounce upon its quality; and, if not promising to become a fit citizen, its birth was not reported. Whether that were a better preventative of the social evils of his time than ours for our times, I am not about to say, not imagining any committee of the cultivated women of our Athens seriously contemplate the measure.

A GENTLEMAN. What was that deformity?

MR. ALCOTT. If the body was not perfect, if the brain was misshapen. Other tests followed later. Not every boy who thought he was bright got admission to the school of Pythagoras: he put him on trial, observing his gait, complexion, voice, silence, sleep, his dreams, conversation, — he kept his eye upon him long before admission. His purpose was to raise up a superior class of men and women. He chose those most favored by natural gifts. The culture of the feeble-minded and unfortunate was reserved for the philanthropists of our times. And Plato adopted like discipline into his own teaching, and ideal republic. Socrates, Plato, Pericles, many of the great names of antiquity, were Pythagoreans.

A GENTLEMAN. Did the Republic include those beneficences?

MR. ALCOTT. Only in the reverse order. It did not wait wickedly until the babes were here, but began at the beginning. Plato said, "Let us have artists and masters, and not leave this matter to the whole mass."

A GENTLEMAN. Acting, I suppose, upon a hint from the flood?

MR. ALCOTT. We can celebrate Plato with enthusiasm, without accepting all his doctrines. Yet it were not unprofitable to study him in this respect especially. If the school were endowed and

to be opened next week, I certainly should be eager to secure a professorship. What a capital chance for our men of means to place a hundred or so of the best-born babes, half girls and half boys, with their parents too, under charge of these superior men and women, to educate, sending them forth, at thirty years of age, to make places, and not take them at hazard, thus adorning the republic with genius and virtue! Doubtless a small per cent would prove failures : could it be larger than now ?

A GENTLEMAN. I should rather put my money into the hands of those who would take one hundred of the worst, and see what they could make of them.

MR. ALCOTT. Excellent ; yet see under what embarrassment that labors. Suppose the purpose were to see what education can do for the gifted. Would not a business man, beginning any enterprise, prefer to take it under the best advantages ? It is humane to take idiots, and make men of sense of them ; or the blind or deaf : but who was the sinner before they arrived ? Every idiot is the child of an idiot. Plato said, " You idiots, you sensualists, don't deserve any such pretty privileges as you apply for, and you shall not have them." That is just what the just God does. He says, " If you do so, this is the result." If you could catch all the old criminals, I might consent for once to hang or drown them forthwith. The trouble is, you can't catch them. It was the sensualist, the great-great-grandfather, perhaps, — he dodged the rope, so the judgment falls upon the innocent little one, and makes him the victim. What estate had he to begin with ? A soft, pulpy brain, all manner of evil tendencies ; and he did what he must. We didn't take him early, and guard him from the evils he inherits. When states undertake that work, abreast of all we are doing now, it will be the dawn of an Athenian age for us. Then, too, our experimental school for the best born — 'tis a happy thing to be nobly born. Think of the difference in being well-born or base-born, — of descending from virtuous ancestors, with few evil dispositions, perverse tastes, so that virtue is easy, delightful, sin unknown, — and of one born into all manner of evil tendencies, and must sin until he finds he has power within to overcome these : think of the difference.

A GENTLEMAN. Is it not a great thing to come up out of that?

MR. ALCOTT. What?

A GENTLEMAN. That of being so ill-born?

MR. ALCOTT. It is the pursuit of heaven under difficulties. None choose to go to heaven under such difficulties; but rather to stay in it, not leave it at all. If we have been so unfortunate as to descend from ancestors who were so unfortunate as to precipitate us into the pit, and we wake up to consciousness therein, a beneficent discipline it is which recovers again for us the heaven we lost, — not by our own fault entirely.

A GENTLEMAN. This unfortunate affair must all have started from the Deity?

MR. ALCOTT. No. God never made sin, and never made a sinner. He gives to every soul some liberty to do as it chooses. If it choose wrong, he says, "There is the penalty;" and the penalty is just that: and, after a succession of sinners, what can you expect but sin? Is it not about time for us to choke sin, or strangle him at the beginning? But it is too late in the evening to dispose of all the old sinners or the new.

WHAT COLD SHADOWS CHURCHES CAST!

IN my winter walks I shun
Shadows all unpierced by sun,
Cold without and cold within.
Lacking even the warmth of sin,
Stands the church all the busy week :
Ah ! I think, if stones could speak,
These would ask, "Where is the Master ?
He would bid us come down faster
Than the leaves fall when they 're dead,
When their time of use has sped."

All the week they seem to shirk,
While the world is hard at work :
Only church and graveyard stand
Idle in the busy land.
Sunday comes : each shut-in pew
Holds a row of chosen few,
Sitting silent, side by side,
For the place is sanctified.
Hark ! was that a saint who sighed,
Or a sinner in his pride,
Weary, sad, dissatisfied ?
Getting not from prayer or sermon
(Cold for him as peaks of Hermon)
Food for hope, but blank despair,
Poisoning even the outer air.
Ah ! I think, if stones could shriek,
These would when some hymns are read,
When the music to them wed
Pierces, hinting depths of woe
We were never meant to know.

There are churches (I have known one)
Where an upward path is shown one,

The Radical.

Which no sin, no shadowing fate,
 Shuts us out from, soon or late.
 Yes, I've known one, spacious, fair,
 Breathed about by happy air
 ('T was in June I first was there).
 Oh! the preacher, as he stood,
 Seemed to bring the Unseen nigher,
 Seemed to draw our souls up higher;
 Pale, as though an inward fire
 Burned, consuming grosser sense,
 Tremulous, low-voiced, rapt, intense,
 He, a prophet, seemed to stand
 On a lofty border-land.
 Happy church from porch to steeple,
 Where he meets his happy people!
 Sacred still, yet social, free,
 As a church can ever be.

In the old cathedrals vast, —
 Dusky vistas 'twixt the past
 And the present hurrying past, —
 Rich and poor kneel down together;
 And it makes no difference whether
 One be Protestant or Roman,
 Saint or sinner, man or woman:
 One may worship unmolested,
 Be by Holy Father blessèd,
 Or, at least, enjoy the music.
 Those church-doors are never closed:
 Labor hath not interposed
 'Twixt the mother and her child.
 Is he worn, distracted, wild?
 There she stands, the mother mild,
 Waiting to console her child.
 Thus methinks the shadows cast
 By those old cathedrals vast
 Seem to let the sunbeams through,
 Whatsoever be the weather,
 From a sky of tender blue.

I would have no shadows cast,
Either from a mildewed past
Or the future looming vast.
"Wheresoever two or three"
Meet and mingle, glad and free
(Souls make subtle harmony),
Is the church where I would be.
When true souls touch one another,
Souls which formal churches smother,
Flashes new, surprising light,
We are lifted to a height
We could never gain alone,
Sitting silent, side by side,
In some church's frozen zone.
How divine is human speech! —
Interchange of thoughts which reach
Upward, helping one another;
Upward, outward, into space, —
Till they stand up face to face
With the thoughts of the All-Father,
And no shadow comes between
Us and the Divine Unseen.

M. R. W.

PARASITES.

DEPENDENCE is the condition that insures enslavement. It craves the firmness and solidity and weight of a stronger and greater nature, and is crushed by these preponderating elements because it lacks the corresponding forces that resist and balance. Its weakness invites oppression, its servility tempts tyranny, its helplessness provokes contempt and invites cruelty. As vultures prey upon carcasses, so will all the ravenous and insatiable monsters in humanity fasten upon the inanimate and flaccid beings whose power is insufficient to defend their life. And this not because of any devouring element of evil that consumes the gentle and inoffensive, but because nature demands vigor, and not imbecility; maturity, not infancy; individuals, and not parasites. Protect and cherish a childish dependence, and it grows rapidly more childish and more dependent; love that species of folly, and you will soon efface even the rudiments of wisdom from the character; encourage this lifelessness, and you will soon carry a limp mass of torpidity. That dependence finds foes everywhere, and in all things; that it is beset upon all sides with the probings of Providence, the strange devices of nature, and the rousing shocks of human intercourse; that it is shaken when drowsy, stimulated when sinking, mocked when feeble, derided when languishing; that it finds no single friend in the universe, and cannot abide with its own; that it shall enjoy no peace, no calm, no respite, but a prolonged warfare with the allied forces of the world,—proves conclusively that dependence shall be exterminated; and with it dies all the dark retainers of slavery,—chattel bondage, social restrictions, the enthrallments of vice, the base allurements of money, the baneful influence of aristocracy, and the subserviency of woman. Woman has been a parasite in the fullest sense of the word. She has clung in the most abject helplessness to anything that promised support. She has been called the relatively weaker, and has proven herself the superlatively weakest, of created

creatures. She has opened her breast for every dart that cruelty could inflict ; prostrated herself under every Juggernaut that could crush her ; and flung herself a living sacrifice upon every altar kindled by superstition, fanaticism, and misrule. She has offered herself a willing tool in the hands of men, and has had no choice in the use they made of her. In her submission, she courted the lash, and ever found it ready to descend. Man was made her scourge, and society the witness that through the scourging and the shame she should at last learn the heroic action of defense. She has been laid in the dust and trampled underfoot, that she might one day tread the earth in triumph, conquering as she treads. There is not an item of social injustice suffered by woman to-day that has not entered her life through some vulnerable point which she has herself opened to the enemy. She is unhappily married to some uncongenial or despotic or intemperate man : she has not the man to blame, but her own blindness in accepting him, and her own miserable weakness in continuing the false relation ; preferring dependence upon this despised man to reliance upon herself, preferring humiliation to self-respect, and lying submission to rectitude and honor. Oh, if women would but consider, that, when they submit to anything less than the divine will as interpreted through their own spiritual consciousness, they are living a false and pernicious life, denying the truth and uttering lie upon lie in their daily act, thought, word, breath ! for even to draw breath in false circumstances is to countenance deceit. She should fold herself in the closest reserve, and fly from the contaminating influence. It is incredible that pure women can devote themselves to these sunken reefs of humanity ; ally themselves to their persons, homes, destinies ; immolate themselves to their sensuality, and share their degradation. A woman who feels bound in duty to live with a drunken husband, accepting the lot in all humility, and swallowing her tears as a cordial, while she ascribes her dispensation to a sickly providential arrangement for the benefit of the infirm, is a curious problem for investigation. Why does she remain ? Does she love the man ? No : love has long ago been swallowed up in disgust. Does she respect him ? No : she loathes and despises his very

presence. Has she faith in his eventual reformation? No: repeated efforts have invariably ended in defeat, and there is not sufficient stamina remaining to effect a cure. Then why do you stay with him? This home question brings a direct reply: "*Because I am afraid to brave the world alone.*" There is the parasite again, preferring to cling to a worm-eaten log, to feed upon corruption, to sustain itself in foul conditions, rather than endure the bracing shock of separation, with the welcome attendants of freedom, a clear conscience, and trust. For heaven's sake, what can be found worse in the world than a drunken husband? Is it poverty? That you have, with an increasing ratio. Is it loneliness? That is there, with its forlorn nakedness disguised in the rags of false appearances and perjured vows. Is it social ostracism? That is thoroughly earned through the wages of dishonor and well-merited contempt. Is it destitution, with its haunting shadow, prostitution? She lives upon its substance already in the name of the law and of social obligations. The parasite will suffer anything rather than loose its hold. Woman has been martyred at her chosen stake. This undeveloped nature will account for all the sad experience that it has entailed upon the sex: it has shaped the circumstance, and fitted the event. Woman is the drudge because she depends upon animal comfort, and seeks to secure it, unwilling to clasp anything higher: man is also a parasite upon that same branch; or rather he clings to the branch, and she to him. As soon as she perceives a higher need than the physical, a nobler avocation than the menial, a larger sphere than her four walls, she will leave the cooking and washing and sewing to some ignorant sister who must learn the same lesson in the best of all schools, — experience. But, as the primal needs cannot be ignored, she will, with quiet hands and active thought, devise new means of providing for the physical necessities in an orderly, beautiful, healthful manner, that will have no deteriorating influence upon the mind or body, and will not absorb the time destined for more spiritual uses. Thus the question is presented, — "How shall we live?" Woman will solve it. She must first free herself from petty cares before the great care will devolve upon her; a solicitude for the people upheld through her own great

strength and calmness which permits her to shed blessing upon blessing without exhaustion. Woman must cease the labor of the hands before her great work of the spirit can begin. She is not to toil, but to teach, and there is that in the ordinary employment of the brain and fingers which distracts the spirit and forbids its manifestation. Thus we have a multitude of manufactured articles, food, clothing, structures, trifles of art and of skill, but scarcely any inspiration. We have the emanations of men's brains, clear, logical, argumentative, abstract, profound, occasionally gleaming with inspiration; but we have few, very few, original utterances of women, welling up from their peculiar spiritual consciousness, fresh and pure, unclouded by any admixture of another's thought.

Women of our day write novels, but the pure white light is scattered through the prism of society into many-colored rays. We have the social aspect and the conventional standard, with the characteristic romance favored by the period; but it is not the true expression of woman. It is fiction, but not philosophy; sentimentality, but not true fervor; sham heroism, but neither fortitude nor faith. Woman, if dependent in no other respect, is a parasite to a false ideal: her standard of womanly excellence is so imperfect that it betrays her as she follows. She adores masculine vigor, character, reliance, rectitude; yet abnegates all share in the qualities she reveres. As man's counterpart, she imagines herself to be his very opposite: and, in place of his supernal qualities, she ascribes to herself inanity, irresolution, a faltering purpose, and most amiable compliance to the wishes of others. One saving grace she admits in herself,—her allegiance to man; but how can she be faithful to her fellow-being when she is faithless to all the principles by which both live? If a woman is a traitor to truth, and an assassin of her own best interests, who can profit by her zeal or devotion? Woman has been lost in the wife and mother: but how can a woman be true in any relation when she is false to herself? How can she prove her power in the function when she erases it from her character? How can she be all when she professes herself nothing? We need woman above all things; the self-conscious woman, not the wife, mother, housekeeper, servant, artisan or artist, writer or

speaker : we want woman detached from all spheres, avocations, capacities, gifts ; free of all pre-conceptions and expectations ; absolved from all claims and specifications ; as abstract as she can become, that we may know something of her essential attributes, and the offspring of good that they will bear to the world. We refuse to be referred to what she is doing in the world : her collective ministrations are trivial compared with her influence when freed from the bondage of the outward forms and exactions. We have a glimpse that her office is to teach the race ; that this is her superior avocation, to enlighten the ignorant through the rays of her intuitive intelligence. This she will shed upon all places, as the sun and rain yield their blessing to the earth. She will teach from her character, from her life, from what she is ; and her peculiar station or experience in life will be merely the channel through which her force takes direction. Thus she may be the wife ; but she was first the self-reliant woman, and her individuality is preserved. She may be the mother, but this is merely the form of maternity : the essence was hers before, and demonstrated in all the care and kindness and loving acts that she ever rendered. She must stand erect, as though alone in the universe, her individual integrity being her sole aim ; and when that is attained, when she is free of all folly and vanity and concession, she will find herself clasped in the fraternity of the human heart, and blessed by the tongues of all the living.

MARIE A. BROWN.

OUR MODERN MATERIALISM.

MATERIALISM is rather an ill-omened word according to the old-fashioned theological notion, which entertained a special grudge against poor matter as something unholy *per se*, and opposed to the better impulses of our nature. This theological idea of matter is a relic of the old Oriental dualism which made matter the opposite of what was denominated spirit,—the seat of disorder, low appetites, and voracious tendencies generally,—regarding it as a mere clog and prison-house of spirit. But poor matter is but a passive thing, after all,—a passivity, rather than an active principle,—making what is called power, or spirit manifest to the senses.

Materialism in philosophy is regarded as mere sensuality, a groveling downwards to the earth. But modern science is relieving matter of the old theological odium. What if matter, at bottom, is one with spirit; spirit being conscious power, and matter unconscious? Berkeley showed that what the metaphysicians call matter—that is, substance which underlies sensible qualities—has no existence whatever; that it is, in fact, a bundle of sensible qualities *merely*, existing in a sentient being either in the creative intelligence or in a created intelligence. In order *to be* it must be *perceived*. The word “matter” is of Sanscrit origin. It is the same with the Sanscrit word “maya,” which signifies illusion; that is, it is no real thing in itself, but simply a thing of sense. It is a laughable fact that neither Byron nor Dr. Johnson, who both undertook to ridicule Berkeley for his idealism, really knew what he meant when he denied the existence of matter. Of course he did not deny the existence of a sensible world, but simply of an unknown and unknowable substratum, in which the qualities of that sensible world are said to inhere. It is the fashion with theologians to call the present a materialistic, mechanical age, as if it, therefore, was a low-thoughted epoch, with its mind downward bent, and as if inventive genius and science, in concerning themselves with amelior-

ating the material condition of the species, were withdrawing men's thoughts from more important subjects. Near the beginning of the present century, Wordsworth lamented the excess of manufacturing industry in England. While he could not repress a feeling of pride at the power which his country derived even half a century ago from her commerce and manufactures, and the inventions of her great mechanical geniuses, such as Watt and Arkwright, still he could not regard physical science and its achievements from any other but the old theological standpoint, as having something impious in them, and unholy, like the building of Babel. In the eighth book of his "Excursion," the character called the Wanderer, after giving an account of the changes in England for the better, effected by manufactures, still asserts the hollowness of all national power, if unsupported by moral worth, giving a passing kick at science. I will quote a passage from the eighth book aforesaid of the "Excursion:"—

"Triumph who will in these profaner rites,
Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform! I cannot share
His proud complacency: yet I exult,
Casting reserve away; exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed, almost a soul
Imparted, — to brute matter, I rejoice,
Measuring the force of their gigantic powers
That by the thinking mind have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come,
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
And the arts died by which they had been raised.
Call Archimedes from his buried tomb

Upon the plain of vanished Syracuse :
And feelingly the sage will make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the philosophy, whose sway depends
On mere material instruments ; how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
By virtue. He, with sighs of pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness."

The above passage is, in point of poetical expression, admirable ; but it is sophistical and false in its statements and conclusions. It is strictly theological, and not in the least scientific. If Archimedes could be summoned from the tomb, he would not indulge in any damaging reflections on art, science, and inventive genius, but would simply regret that he could not have appeared at a more humanitarian and democratic period of history than he did, so that his astonishing mechanical and scientific genius could have ministered to the welfare of the masses of his fellow-men, instead of being wasted, as it was, in the devising of warlike machines for the discomfiture of the besieging fleet of Marcellus. The old Egyptian, Tyrian, and Palmyrene grandeur was the grandeur of the few, and not of the many : hence it was evanescent. Their arts ministered to the pride and luxury of the few, and utterly ignored the masses of mankind, who remained in ignorance, poverty, and barbarism : hence Tyre and Palmyra and Thebes collapsed, and cumber the desert with their ruins. Modern science and mechanical invention elevate mankind, and not a comparatively insignificant class, of kings and nobles. They diffuse wealth, intelligence, self-respect, and comfort to the millions, and do not stop short at the few. The teaching of the moral law went on for thousands of years without sensibly elevating the race. As such teaching did not elevate the masses above a slavery to the lowest necessities of their nature, and the dullest, most unenlightened drudgery, it obtained scarcely a recognition from them. The moral law, which is written on the tablets of every man's soul, was so bleared and obscured by ignorance and a wretched material

environment that its behests could not be made intelligible to the masses. Our missionaries, who undertake to teach dogmatic Christianity to the barbarians of Africa and the Pacific islands, find, after years of toil, that they can make no lasting impression on their savage pupils. But when they introduce among them the utensils, mechanic arts, and material conveniences of civilized life, they immediately excite an interest, and prepare the way for the reception of moral truth. The decalogical prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal," might as well be addressed to a fox as to a naked savage. An exclusive civilization is, from the nature of things, insecure and of uncertain continuance, because the barbarism of the many is liable at any moment to overwhelm it in some crisis of change and revolution. Ancient civilization was exclusive. It was environed by barbarism, and underlaid by vast servile populations. But modern Christian civilization is all-comprehensive, or is getting to be. Whatever it does is not for the elevation and amelioration of a class, of a favored few, but for the whole. Its sphere of action is the whole globe, or all habitable portions of it. It is universal and democratic. Does it devise a splendid and expeditious mode of travel, it is not like the coach drawn by highly groomed horses, for the wealthy merely; but locomotion by steam is so cheap, swift, and powerful, that it is available to the man of the smallest means. It conveys everybody, in the shortest possible time, over the greatest given space. The agencies of modern material civilization being thus universally beneficent, like the air and the sunlight, are in no danger of decaying or dying out, but furnish the very material conditions favorable to indefinite moral growth.

B. W. BALL.

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FROM THE COUNTRY.

[CARL WRENSLER'S REPORT OF HIMSELF AND OTHERS.]

IX.

MY father had just thrown himself down on the lounge in the sitting-room, and picked up "The Gospel Messenger," more from habit than from any idea of reading, when Aunt Flora (by the way, I am surprised that I have not before thought of calling her by name) entered the room, looking animated, as if she had been indulging in pleasing thoughts. He dropped the paper at once, and his whole demeanor changed, as he rose to his feet. Aunt Flora's face became slightly crimson as she beheld this unexpected demonstration, for it was for her what might be called a most enthusiastic welcome. As she told me some time after, it was to her "a moment of absolute bliss." He did not in so many words tell her she was welcome, — his manner was tell-tale; but he did say, —

"It's a bright morning."

"Yes," replied Aunt Flora, and her voice slightly trembled.

She seated herself by the window, and took her sewing from the little Indian-made basket on the stand.

My father resumed his place on the lounge, near by. Picking up the paper, he said, "This is 'The Gospel Messenger,' for which you once got up a club."

Aunt Flora smiled, and arranged her work.

"Flora," said he, after a pause, "I haven't known much about you until now."

"I confess I have known but little of you," she replied.

"I am getting my idea of woman considerably elevated," he continued. "You appear to me an entirely different person than you did a month ago."

"And you, John, have changed in my eyes. I need hardly say, you have vastly improved. It begins to seem as though we

were indeed related to each other. I give you credit for somewhat besides worldliness now."

"Why did you think me worldly?" he asked.

"Why did you think me silly?" she asked, in reply.

"Why, if I *did* think so, you *seemed* so, I suppose," he answered, laughing.

"You did think so, I am quite sure. And I have no doubt I was."

"And no doubt I was worldly."

"You seemed so, for a deacon, certainly."

"Tut, tut! a *deacon* is nothing. But, how is it that we could live together under the same roof for so many years, entire strangers? You might have been silly, and I might have been worldly: but that don't explain; silly and worldly are nothing. Here is the fact we have just found out: there is a bond of union between us such as we never dreamed of, unless it was when we were children together. I tell you we had romping gay times in those days. Don't you remember? But after that, you lived away, and I was married: finally, when you came to live with us, you had, of course, greatly changed. I was absorbed in my business, and had changed, also; and so, until now, — strange enough it seems, — we have never scraped up a new acquaintance."

"That is true, *too* true; we have hardly been together alone five minutes at a time since I came. At first your negligence grieved me. I longed for some one in whom I could confide, I had so many things to tell you; but I could never feel at liberty; you were always pre-occupied. I used to say to myself sometimes, 'He makes a home for me because I am his sister, and it would be a scandal for him to do otherwise; but he has no regard for me as his sister.' But then I reflected that you had your cares and your family to go between us; and I never saw but that you were a good husband and father; and you have never been otherwise than kind to me, although you have occasionally smiled at my 'oddities.' I couldn't blame you for that, altogether. I knew that I was odd, and I understood why. I lived in a little world by myself; and, when I came out of it, I came very much like a stranger among you, bringing my foreign

manners with me. Could I have mingled with the rest of the family on equal terms, my *oddities* would undoubtedly have worn off. But that I could n't do. There were many reasons. But let that pass. 'We have 'scraped acquaintance' at last. I feel as though I were, indeed, 'a new creature.'"

"I see how it has been. But I have had trials too. I have been immersed in what you call worldliness,—I see it now plainer than I did,—and there is as much to vex one in that 'little world' as in yours. — By the way, the bishop left a book of poems, which I have carried in my overcoat-pocket ever since, looking into it but once, and then only to read a few lines, when, strangely enough, my eye rested on — Let me get the book. Here it is. Let me see: it's 'The Works of George Herbert, in Prose and Verse.' The bishop said it was charming. I am afraid that it is most too sentimental for me, but I don't know. Very likely *you* will appreciate it."

"Thank you," said Aunt Flora dryly.

"Oh, I meant that as a compliment," observed my father, turning the leaves of the book. "Ah! here is the page I opened to, and first read. It's in old-style spelling, and a little difficult.

"'Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil;
Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dimme
To all things els. Wealth is the conjuror's devil,
Whom, when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
Gold thou mayst safely touch; but, if it stick
Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.

"'What skills it if a bag of stones or gold
About thy neck do drown thee? raise thy head:
Take starres for money; starres not to be told
By any art, yet to be purchased.
None is so wasteful as the scraping dame:
She loseth three for one,—her soul, rest, fame.'"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Aunt Flora. "Do let me see the book. Why have you not shown it to me before? Ah! I forget,—we have n't known each other—long."

"The whole poem is full of fine things. Here's something you will appreciate:—

“By all means use sometimes to be alone.
 Salute thyself: see what thou dost wear.
 Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own;
 And tumble up and down what thou findest there.’

That is jolly enough: I shall begin to take to poetry if it is all like this. And these next two lines, — ah! here you have the doctrine. Listen: —

“Who cannot rest till he good fellows finde,
 He breaks up house, turns out of doores his minde.’

And again: —

“All forrain wisdom doth amount to this, —
 To take all that is given; whether wealth,
 Or love, or language: nothing comes amisse.
 A good digestion turneth all to health.’”

“That is ‘sound doctrine,’” said Aunt Flora, interrupting him with a laugh.

“‘Sound doctrine’ for a ‘good digestion.’ ‘But listen: there is more of the same article.

“Keep all thy native good, and naturalize
 All forrain of that name; but scorn their ill:
 Embrace their activeness, not vanities.
 Who follows all things, forfeiteth his will.
 If thou observest strangers in each fit,
 In time they’ll runne thee out of all thy wit.’”

“I think I detect the flavor of heresy in the bishop’s favorite poet,” said Aunt Flora. “He is really very fine. The book is quite an acquisition to our library. I shall want to read it through.”

“Here is another fine verse,” said my father, running his eye over the page.

“When thou dost purpose aught (within thy power),
 Be sure to doe it, though it be but small:
 Constancie knits the bones, and makes us flowre,
 When wanton pleasures beckon us to thrall.
 Who breaks his own bond, forfeiteth himself:
 What nature made a ship, he makes a shelf.’

"The last two lines are capital:—

"Who breaks his own bond forfeiteth himself:
What nature made a *ship*, he makes a *shelf*,"—

And loads it down with *nothing*.—Ah! but *here* is 'sound doctrine' for you:—

"Look to thy mouth: diseases enter there.
Thou hast two sconces, if thy stomach call;
Carve or discourse: do not a famine fear.
Who carves, is kind to two; who talks, to all.
Look on meat, think it dirt, then eat a bit;
And say withal, Earth to earth I commit."

"That beats the Dutch—I haven't a doubt the bishop enjoyed that. He likes a quiet joke as well as the next man.—
'Look on meat, *think* it *dirt*: that takes the poetry out of a good steak, to be sure; but it took a poet to do it. Who could 'eat a bit' after that,—

"And say withal, Earth to earth I commit"?—

"Ah me! a funeral at the dinner-table!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed Aunt Flora, smiling; then presently asked, "Do you remember the vegetarian young gentleman who called at our house when we were children?"

"Why, no—yes: the man who ate *eggs* as a compromise?"

"The same."

"How we laughed over that!"

"And you remarked, 'We shall have to hurry up the chickens, or get a new lot of hens, if he stays long.'"

"Did I? That was *jolly* for me."

"You *were* pretty jolly in those days. It begins to seem like old times now. But I was thinking of the vegetarian,—he would enjoy that verse"—

"All but the 'eat a bit.'"

"Ah, but that is what he *would* enjoy,—the joke on the rest of us: that is what we do,—'eat a bit,'—or many bits."

"No: but that is n't what Herbert means.—I don't know,

though; I guess he meant to make a joke, anyhow, and leave others all the jokes they could get out of it, — 'the more the merrier,' you know.

"That was what we used to say."

"And will say so again many a time yet. What did you remark a while ago? I just caught the words, — flavor of heresy?"

"Why, yes: it struck me that there was an unchurchly odor in the lines as you read them."

"Perhaps my own breath flavored them."

"I think not."

"But it must have been so, for they are to be found in 'The Church Porch.' See for yourself, there, the first poem in the book, — 'The Church Porch.'"

"Well, that is just the place for heresy. Where else stands the bishop himself? Not in the *church*, but in the *porch*."

"Just ready to say, 'Adieu!'"

"There is no heresy outside of the church. The world knows not of heretics."

"Ah, the world's very sensible!"

"When it is n't *worldly*."

"Or *silly*?"

"Exactly."

"Now are we even again. But — let me whisper it in your ear, Flora — there is somewhat *churchy* in this talk against worldliness. You remember my stump speech to Dupont on that point?"

"I think I do; and you were right as to the *matter* of your discourse. I too have ceased to esteem people worldly in a bad sense who mind the affairs of this world rather than the next. The term has a proper meaning. I imagine that Jesus did not refer to this *earth*, when he said, 'This world.' He meant fashion, money-getting, low and trivial affairs, — things which have little nourishment for our highest nature. It was because so *great a majority* of the people of this world surrendered their lives to those inconsequential affairs, that he said, 'This world.' — 'The *fashion* of this world passeth away.'"

"And of all worlds, probably."

"In a sense. Anything which has a real relation to eternal

life, which contributes to build us up in the verities of life, will not pass away. If there are other worlds where these things are more common, where it is more the *fashion* to use them than it is here, the fashion of those worlds will not pass away."

"But I don't like the word 'fashion.' It is *fashion* that shall pass away, or *ought* to. I believe in doing things from *principle*, not because it is the fashion. It does n't matter what my neighbors are doing: neighbors are nothing."

"Oh, yes, something; but, of course, principles are more. I think we agree. I used the word 'fashion' in a broader sense,—that was all."

"Yes, I begin to see: there are so many senses, one can't be very obstreperous towards others until he knows what they mean. The bishop was nearer right than I supposed at the time. He said to me, 'At *heart*, all people believe the same.' I expect there is something in it. I don't know, but, if we could keep cornering Dupont, he would keep retreating, until some time and somewhere, in the far-off millennial dawn, he would begin to near his heart, and, if we had not strayed away from our own meantime, we should all begin to believe alike."

"You mistake my remark. I said that I used the word in a different sense; but I did so intelligently. I did not at all retreat from my meaning."

"Oh, I did n't intend to apply all I have said to you. I but followed the train of my thoughts. I left you at the station when I started. Dupont or the bishop are the next stopping-places, you know."

"I know; and that reminds me,—there is a question I have been anxious to ask you. Do you think the bishop will really come out publicly?"

"I do."

"But why has he not done so sooner? How could he believe in these new ideas, and yet officiate in the church as bishop?"

"That was Parson Dupont's question. How quick he caught up the idea! He wanted an excuse to doubt the bishop's honesty: he could n't wait, he was in such haste to bark at the good man's heels. There's the trail of the serpent for you!"

"But I ask the same question."

"Yes; but there is a difference. You are anxious to guard his honor, or that he should do so himself. I don't think you believe him capable of being dishonest."

"I think him capable of every virtue."

"But Dupont cries out at once, 'He is a hypocrite if what you say is true!'—eager to brand him. He would sputter before the gates of heaven for the church's sake. The fact is, it has been a *growth* with the bishop. He had to wait until the flower had blossomed before he could pluck it. We can't judge each other in such cases. One man would act one way, another man another way: it depends upon one's temperament. The bishop is cautious, and moves slowly. He makes up his mind, and then waits a week to see if he really *has* made it up. Meantime, he must go on as he has been going. The transition is embarrassing, certainly. One hardly knows which is the best course. To a reflecting person like the bishop, it is n't clear that he should cut himself loose with one blow. He waits, and gradually disentangles himself. He is a conservative,—that is plain enough; but he is *honest* and *sure*. He will follow the lights of reason, but never speed before them. He is slow, else he had never lived to be sixty years old before making so important a move. You or I, with his advantages, would have blossomed at sixteen."

"But he could have quietly suspended his official duties until he was fully convinced?"

"No, he could n't; else he *would*."

"I don't see how he forced himself to stay in the church and keep up a show of belief after he had destroyed his belief. I would have taken the benefit to my *doubt*, even."

"But I say his mind does not act as does yours or mine. He is calm and patient; he weighs the evidences; he never acts upon doubts."

"That, I think, is his grave fault. I don't say he is not sincere. But, if he *did* revere his doubts, I think he would be much the stronger man. My own experience teaches me to reverence doubt, as though it were prompting me to somewhat higher. Where I cannot fully believe, I will not act. Doubt shades the deed, and gives it an ugly shape. This, at least, I am resolved

upon henceforth. A new light falls across the pathway of my life, and I see things differently. I seem to awake as out of a long and restless sleep. My life begins anew. Two boons are granted me,—your friendship, and the secret of self-respect.”

“What is that secret, pray?”

“The ability to do nothing when the heart does not give free and encouraging consent.”

“I can’t shake my head at that; but it is a doctrine fraught with extreme difficulty.”

“But that is no argument against the doctrine.”

“True.”

“It is an argument against our weakness.”

“Yes. But to come back to the bishop. If he rushed headlong out of the church, they would hold him up to ridicule, as a man of rash or impulsive temperament. Now that he goes cautiously, they will cry him up as a hypocrite. And yet not one of them who knows him but must confess inwardly that he is a pure and honest man.”

“They will doubtless resort to many a slander. They naturally would under any circumstances. As the fact stands, they can certainly make a plausible show against him. I see the falsity of any such charge: I think he has been candid with himself, acting up to his convictions as fast as they arrived, or as he was able to produce them; but I have little faith in his being the man to lead the new movement. He will *strengthen* it, however. His resignation will create intense excitement.”

“Well, we must wait and see. It’s plain that there is a new movement started.”

“Yes; and what is remarkable, to my mind, the letter of our great-grandfather, which we have treasured up so long, seems to anticipate its entire progress. This becomes plainer to me each day.”

“I know it is so. He was a prophet, if ever there was one.”

“But it was a simple matter. He predicted nothing he could not construct out of the material he had at hand,—a new world, a new people, with the idea of liberty inspiring them.”

“I know; but there is little to justify his ideal, even yet, in our actual life as a nation.”

"True: but it is a great work to create a free nation, I begin to see; a great work for a nation to *create itself*. Of course we had nothing more to start with than we brought over the ocean. The pilgrims were fired with a sublime idea, as the letter says: but the fire had not done its work; it had not separated the gold from the dross. Yet here was the boundless opportunity."

"Not yet even has that opportunity been improved. Worse, perchance, the fire seems to have died out."

"No, not so. To change the figure, you know 't is said there is a *tide* in the affairs of men. There are many; a constant flow and ebb, I doubt not. We exhaust ourselves at every step, and then sink back and wait for the returning tide. So our fathers were used up at gaining what they called their independence of Great Britain. They worked at making the Union when the tide of humanity was at low ebb. They did not represent the New World, then. The Old World still held its sway over them. They were that world themselves. They had a new idea, but at heart they were still wedded to the old. And, as you say, it is very much the same to-day. We have not won our independence yet. If negro slavery is ever abolished, we shall then begin to understand what independence means on a far higher plane. And then, John, *woman* will share emancipation with the negro. — I will be prophetess, for once."

"Flora, you have been picking up mightily of late. You seem to have the whole programme mapped out in your mind."

"Oh, these things have been floating through my mind for a dozen of years; but nothing distinct. Until recently, I believed the church was the appointed means for accomplishing everything good. Since I gave up that notion, I have gained each day a larger view. Instead of being the friend of the country, I see that the church is its deadliest foe, and the most dangerous: it poisons the fountain. There is where the great fight is to come. It may be far off, but it affects me as though it were present. I see an open field, and but two opposing armies. All differences have melted into these two units. The one banner has inscribed upon it 'ROME'; the other, 'REASON.' What we call 'Protestantism' has disappeared. It was a failure."

"As we see and know it to be ourselves even to-day."

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"Yes, indeed : a transition platform, that is all ; on which the weary pause for breath, and the timid to seek shelter. But all things in their season : you will appreciate that remark. Unless our new world is itself to prove a failure, we shall in due season make amends for all these short-comings. It is the religious revolution that shall inaugurate true freedom, I am convinced."

"I am convinced."

"The condition of woman will then be wonderfully altered. She will be a new being on the earth. I shall not live to see the day, but I partake of its joys in anticipation : I feel myself already emancipated from a fate which, one month ago, I deemed myself bound to for life. My spirit is free to-day. O John, you can't imagine what a burden has rolled off my soul. Yes, I *have* been silly. What a performance was my reading of that letter to the bishop !"

"Oh ! but he enjoyed it."

"But I was a fool, nevertheless. How I carried sail the week before ! Oh, yes, and a thousand silly things ; but — well — no matter now. What are you thinking about ?"

"Why — why, about what a change has come over us all. No, not *all*, I fear. I wish Jane — but no ; she is a good wife, — she has n't any time for such things. I'm not going to borrow any trouble. There's the old saying, 'You can't tell how far a toad will hop, by looking at it.' Who would have thought — looking at you — but I am not indulging in a very elegant comparison" —

"Oh, I do n't mind."

"I suppose not. Jane may be as far gone as we are, for aught I know. I did n't count on you a mite. But, unlike you, she has had a family of children to bring up, and has got them on her hands yet. Married women don't have much leisure time to brood over these things. It would be robbing their children."

"I hope the day will come when these things will not have to be so much brooded over ; when there will be no more clashing of interests ; when the sacred duties of woman and the sacred duties of wife and of mother will not conflict. When our life is once whole and true, it will be harmonious in all these respects."

"Yes : but it's a great problem."

"More simple, I imagine, than it now appears."

—"Well, we have had a long talk."

"I trust it will not be the last one. I can hardly realize our new situation, our mutually improved prospect."

—"There are Herbert's Poems. I must go to my work.— Whew! I am an hour late. Mind you preserve your report of my interview with Dupont. I think you'll have to read that some day to the bishop, as you did the *letter*."

"Not *as* I did the letter, I hope."

X.

FOUR weeks. —

Four weeks may be long, or short; visibly important, or otherwise; virtually important, or otherwise. It depends on circumstances: it depends more upon persons.

It is my faith that circumstances can never balk a soul inclined to freedom. Circumstances on their own level grind up hordes of people, without doubt. These perish by the wayside, seemingly, and pass from the memory of earth. We reckon them as so many failures. I will not undertake to pronounce their certain end. I surmise there may be many a victory never heralded to mortal ears.

Why do we speak of failure at all? It is because we believe that a soul should be superior to its surroundings. It should not choose their choice. All surroundings are convertible, or defiable, by the will from above. The soul is the master. The situation cannot supplant one's heroism. It may be desperate; but ought not the soul to be desperate also? We never excuse one who is not. We pity failure: yet there is no blinking the fact. Failure, we say, because we affirm the possibility of success. We deny the domination of circumstances. Do we ever say, "Circumstances favored him, and therefore he was successful"? 'Tis not the truth. The winds favored: the ship came into port. But if the ship had put up no sail? Do you say, "Ah! but if the sails were up, and there had been no breeze?" But I say the sails *were* up. The ship was becalmed: yet there were the spreading sails!—Would the gods please to fill them?—"Virtue,"—I am told Aristotle once said as much,— "Vir-

tue is exact equilibrium." The ship rested in its integrity. Would the gods please to fill the sails? If not, was it necessary that the ship should immediately ride into port? If it waited becalmed a century—a century is but as an hour when it is passed. "Having done all, stand!" You can afford that. Sink or swim, it matters not; survive or perish, it matters not. Was it necessary that the ship should enter a particular earthly port? If it had gone down to the sea's bottom, would not that have been a port also? The fact is not established that London, as a port, is superior to Sharkdom. At the judgment, it is said, the sea shall give up its dead. Will London? *Could* London?

Virtue is equilibrium or self-poise. It is not Fate that crushes us. We can endure external misfortunes; we can be resigned to outward adversities; our resignation despoils Fate of its terrors; its fetters cease from galling: but we can never resign ourselves to our own supineness; we cannot rest with our proper force unspent.

—To go to the sea's bottom without having done our part! that alone is failure.

To become food for fishes because of our sins, and not for our virtues' sake! then, and then only do they dine off our failure.

—It depends on persons, I say, on each soul, whether or not the days are days of profit, more than on circumstances.

I have read in the philosophy of Epictetus this sentiment: "Demand not that events should happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well." I desire to insist on this "you." There are events; and then, ah! there is *you*. You are *the* ~~event~~ *exent* above and more than all other events.

One may lapse from integrity on most occasions. But the brief moments wherein he held his soul in uprightness, speaking by word or act the truth out of its own eternity, are as his guardian angels returning evermore to claim and to serve him.

Little by little we build our own houses.

We quarry and shape the blocks. These, knowing each other, move by their own attractions into their places. A day comes in which we walk out of the tenement of Fate; and, lo! there is the house not made with hands, the house we have builded.

We put our spell on circumstances, and forget what we have done. While we go, descending, to find a grave, they are yielding to our sway.

Fate takes us more at our word than we take ourselves.

If we but show our colors once, Fate no longer hopes for more than a postponement of our victory.

More far-sighted than we are, Fate foresees all the surprises of our salvation. Remembering the signs, Fate expects the seasons.

"Be our hearts not shaken,
Though our fruit be nipt in the bud :
There is no end to our blossoming."

XI.

FOUR weeks after the interview between my father and Rev. Jerry Dupont occurred his conversation—reported in the chapter before the last—with Aunt Flora.

It is safe to say, in that brief interval a revolution was consummated. Two souls were born again. For a long period previous there were signs in the heavens ; but the actual transfiguration of the earth came only in those last weeks. Our household was aglow under a new illumination ; it was astir with a new life. There was no disputing this. We all partook of it ; we all passed under its influence. Aunt Flora and my father were the animating spirits. And yet, if any one of us had been asked what it was that had stolen over the spirit of our home, I am sure neither my mother, my grand-mother, nor Aunt Betsey could have put into words any sort of a reply. Had I been asked, I should unhesitatingly have replied that it was Aunt Flora. To my young mind, the change that had stolen over *her* was wonderful. When some of the school-boys, to spite me, said, about that time, that both of my aunts were old maids, I remember I told them promptly, "*Aunt Flora* isn't any more of an old maid *now* than any of the big school-girls." Boisterously they laughed at the idea, and asked, with an air of triumph, "Isn't she older *now* than ever she was before?" My emphatic "No!" but increased their fun. They failed to comprehend my

paradox. Nor did I comprehend it myself. But I could not fail of apprehending it, having daily before my eyes the living witness, the miracle herself.

The most I perceived was a few threads, which in some way I knew had been woven into the new condition of our domestic affairs, and into the disposition of Aunt Flora in particular. I believed that the starting-point was her reading of our ancestral letter. I saw that since then she had put aside her prayer-book, and went no more to church. But what was there in those facts to account for the change? Whatever there was, was beyond my depth. I was all too grateful for the event itself, let the cause be what it might, to be over-curious. I think that I had always secretly liked Aunt Flora. At least, I wanted to like her. But I could n't. There was no way whereby I could extend my likeables, and feel at the same time a certainty of their not being lopped off. Though Aunt Flora was seldom demonstrative in what I esteemed her ugliness, and never so at all unless provoked, her reserve had a certain uncertainty pervading it which ever admonished me to beware. My affection found in her prevailing mood nothing to call it forth; on the contrary, it was continually affronted, depreciated, riled, and soured. I felt that I was in her eyes, for most part, but a trivial affair,—that was the sum of her offending. Occasionally she would bring me into service, as she did when she desired an audience for the rehearsal of my great-great-grandfather's letter. I was "better than nothing," she seemed to think. I do not desire to over-estimate my real value at that time, nor to estimate it at all. I am modest enough to concede that her estimate was a perfectly just one. I only urge that it was not calculated, at that period of my existence, to have an effect at all comparable to that produced by my mother's "sovereign remedy" for children,—that is all.

—Aunt Flora's ways had never been as my mother's ways. When I would enter the house and look on her unsympathizing countenance, I could not help more than half hating her. Nor would I always conceal my disgust. I had a way—what child has not?—of making myself important when older people went too far in ignoring my presence. I also knew how to be tantaliz-

ing without laying myself open to paternal censure. What aggravated the case the more, Aunt Flora could never make my mother understand the true import of my misbehavior. I could safely defy all her efforts in that direction. For instance, — to explain a little, — I would follow her into some room whither she had retreated to be alone, quietly take my seat opposite her, and there sit and simply *look* at her. My mother "saw no harm in that." She little dreamed of the "little world" within whose unnatural boundaries Aunt Flora was imprisoned. I might sit the whole day and look at *her*: it would not disturb her any more than when "puss" did the same. She was not in prison. If she was, she did not realize it. She was not an object of curiosity. She was not conscious of being on exhibition. Aunt Flora was. Had she been physically deformed, the effect of my mocking survey of her infirmity would not have been more to her discomfort. She could have endured the same ill-treatment from a grown-up person; or she could have defended herself. It would have been a proper thing to do. But she "ought to be above noticing a mere child." I was not a *mere* child. She strove her best, however. She would try hard to sit me out. I generally held my own until I made her speak. A cross word from her was my prize. When once obtained, I took it, and departed. But sometimes she was too much for me. Simply *looking* didn't carry the day. On such occasions I would rise and begin to arrange my chair, carrying on a conversation with myself which I knew she could not fail to interpret. Placing the chair against the wall, I would say, —

"Let me see. How is *proper*? Ought it to stand *exactly* square? I think it should *turn* a little, — yes, a little bit; just enough to be *sociable*. "But ought it not to turn toward the *parlor* door? No; I think not. Toward the *kitch* — no — ah, no Oh! I know now: it ought to turn toward the fireplace, — *just* a little. *All* the chairs ought to. I don't like to see things *too* square. Not *I*. There's *art* in fixing things," and so on.

This mock-soliloquy generally wound up with a low whistling performance, carried on between my teeth, which I counted on as being the skillful part of my little game. If aught moved Aunt

Flora from her forbearance, it was this last touch; and thereupon I had to be marshaled out of the room.

After she had been "born again," I no longer had the disposition to engage in such little tricks of villiany. I explained to her then, and told her it used to provoke me so that she should be such an "old maid." I always knew that there was no need of it, and now I was satisfied. I did not mean that she could help not getting married. I had never known of her having a beau. To my mind it was not necessary she should marry in order to cease being an "old maid." She might cease *acting* like one. Possibly she might have had a beau had she not driven all the beaux away by being so prim. How could a man "pop the question" to a woman whom he could not get (socially) within forty feet of?

These patronizing confessions, poured into Aunt Flora's ear with an entire confidence on my part that they were the sagest of conclusions, and that they would prove a most gracious wiping out of all past grievances, were so well received, I for a long while regarded myself as a supérior sort of person. It seemed that I had remained stationary at the centre of all propriety. Aunt Flora it was who had returned as a prodigal spirit to crave restoration and forgiveness. She was willing to indulge me. I might have my own explanation. She smiled, without quite assenting, yet without disputing, and we were warm friends.

Twenty years have passed since those to me exciting and puzzling days. Through the medium of intervening experience I find a clearer vision. Things then but dimly hinted, or hidden from view completely, now re-appear with distinctness. I recall so much which then had no meaning which I could fathom, so much which is now so full of meaning, that I long to renew the opportunity of conversing with Aunt Flora face to face, and of confessing my sins. Often I have returned to those early scenes as a spectator. Often I sit and look upon myself, and long to arrest her attention, as she is heroically enduring my insolence, and assure her that "the little piece of impudence," perched in a chair with his feet on the rounds, is not Carl Wrensler at all. How startled she would be to hear my strange voice! What a tussle I should have with "young impu-

dence" to drag him from his throne! He would scratch and bite and kick, I doubt not. But I am sure I should succeed, even as I have done. Where is the youngster now? Echo answers, "He is slain. His imperial robe is woven into a rag-carpet."—Thanks to Aunt Flora, I was able to win this victory.

Often I return to those after scenes when Aunt Flora had "won the victory" for herself, and no longer provoked the impudence that was in me to such unseemly exposures.

I seem, even as I write, once more to enter the bright little sitting-room; and, behold! I am on the lounge where lay my father twenty years ago—how curious that I should have preserved his habit! Aunt Flora is in her place by the window, and there sits the Indian basket on the stand. I do not seem to have, as my father did, "The Gospel Messenger" in my hands. I have carried thither with me a copy of "The Boston Radical," yet I seem to be partly hiding it from her sight. Evidently our conversation turns wholly upon olden times, and doubtless that accounts for my conduct. "The Radical," if introduced, would call up foreign or modern topics. I seem at the moment especially interested in Aunt Flora alone. Her experience is the theme, and she appears wonderfully delighted that I so understand and sympathize with her. No words are spoken: nevertheless, we seem to be conversing earnestly. Though I hear no sound, I interpret what is silently said. I think I cannot do better than to begin a report. I grasp the thought at the middle of a sentence which I am silently imparting:—

"A line of Tennyson's, Aunt Flora, runs thus:—

"A little grain of conscience made him sour."

"Do not look surprised until you see what turn I will make of this. You had, previous to your "new birth," "a little grain of conscience," which made you "sour." You felt it chiding you, and your remorse made you disagreeable to others. I think that you have since lived nearer to your ideal life, which is the cause of your cheerfulness. Have I hit near the mark?—When we don't hate ourselves, we are more apt to be agreeable to others."

— I find it difficult reporting my own speech where the act does not employ the memory. The vision no longer seems real. I must return to a more natural method.

Aunt Flora's lonely and strange life must have impressed me beyond all other influences, for her character has never ceased growing upon me. I draw closer to her as the years glide on. There is more and more of her. Most people fade out of my recollection. They pass away, and leave no line of continuous communication. A few seem to have thrust out little invisible tendrils, which I unconsciously suffered to enter and take root in my mind or heart. There they have nourished themselves, all unbeknown to me, until, lo! at length I daily am gladdened with new and freshest blossoms which I know, by a certain inward sign, must have grown also on the original branch.

Aunt Flora left many marks which I have recognized since her time in ways which I have traveled.

I seem to have had two Aunt Floras. Were the two identical in self-consciousness? Did the new one remember the old one? The new one wore the old one's clothes. The new one never ceased claiming as her own whatsoever property had belonged to her predecessor. So I think that the last Aunt Flora must have been hidden away in the first. She must have been there present, not only as a *possibility*, but as a *virtuality*. A metaphysician would reveal how it was that Aunt Flora the latter was alive during the reign of Aunt Flora the former. He would define all the conditions of her earthly pre-existence. "From her cradle," my father often said, "she has been such a strange creature! At times gay as the gayest; the next moment off by herself, pouting and dreaming, what about nobody knows."

"Pouting and dreaming"!

Of what did she dream? Of the ideal life suppressed by the conditions of her birth, by her surroundings, the circumstances attending her growth into womanhood!

Though there are always, when one is thus imprisoned, many concurring adverse circumstances, there is generally some one particular point where all their force, so to speak, is concentrated. Break through that, and you have broken through them all. They disappear without your notice. The ground clears about

you, the sky of clouds breaks up and moves away from above you, and you stand suddenly in sunlight, your feet on the solid earth, made free with large horizons of space on every side.

Aunt Flora's evil circumstance was the Church. There her energies had been absorbed, but not in response to her ideal admonitions. These had long been suppressed. They were the "conscience" that embittered her days. The routine of the Church was oppressive. Her nature found no freedom while yoked to its service. She was unfitted for every duty; for no method open to her was in harmony with her aspirations. What was native to her found no vent. What was foreign to her held her for its uses.

Not wholly conscious of this, yet *feeling* the truth, her whole life was disturbed, degraded, and rendered disagreeable to others.

Her mind once free to recognize and vindicate her intuitions, she regained the self-poise and health of her naturally believing and happy nature.

She was free to speculate, to dream, to order her mind with respect to ideas. Whatever result she may have reached, who shall say, that, for a soul tortured with longings thus to deliver itself, there lies any other path towards heaven?

An item or two I must set down here, not to leave my report too fragmentary. I am not now going much beyond the occasion of her conversation with my father.

The points to be noticed are, —

1. Her enthusiasm. She did all the little duties of the house with a happy zest.
2. She made friends wherever she went in the neighborhood.
3. She was anticipating the movement of the venerable bishop Lighthouse.

One item I must add as to her appearance. I noticed at the same time — yet said nothing — that her waving hair had begun to grow lower on her forehead. I could not but realize how much finer was the shape of her head.

NATURELLE.

MY goddess romped at school,
Fetched April's boldest violet :
Her crown was her brown hair,
With diamonds of its own gloss set.

I envied not the Greek :
Callisto, Io, Proserpine,
Of all their ills were saved
Had Zeus and Dis her beauty seen.

Fine dames forgot their airs,
And when her step led through the mart
Traffic forebore its greed ;
Yet simpleness was all her art.

For beauty, use her rule ;
Her language, tone and gentle ways ;
Her grace shewed best in tasks
She loved ; and peace filled all the days.

A maid when last we met,
A woman's form is now her earthly dress :
O Time and World, I pray
Ye have not changed her simpleness.

J. B. M.

CHURCH VERSUS CHURCH-MEMBER.

“MAY the Lord have mercy upon your soul!”
A good wish, surely, if we look only at the words, and their obvious import. And yet, so sinister and ill-boding are the occasions to which the use of this formula is confined, and so evil is the fate that follows, or is expected to follow, its official utterance, that its moral effect is that of imprecation rather than benediction. When the criminal in the dock has heard these words, he knows that his case is desperate. And this import of fatality seems so much the exclusive meaning of the expression, that we are not surprised to find the simple Sir Andrew, in the play, using it in that sense, and saying to his opponent, in a challenge to mortal combat, “God have mercy upon one of our souls! He *may* have mercy upon *mine*; but my hope is better, and so look to thyself.”

“May the Lord have mercy upon your soul!”

As the State, speaking by the Judge, winds up with this formula the sentence of its severest punishment, so the church, speaking by its minister, uses the same expression in decreeing *its* severest penalty, excommunication.

In the following letter we find a case of the recent exercise of this power by an Orthodox Congregational Church. The case is worth publishing, not only to illustrate the nature of the power here claimed, and the basis of it, and to show the sort of fact which is deemed a fitting occasion for its exercise, but to admonish Unitarians and Rationalists not to jump too rapidly to the conclusion that Orthodoxy is undergoing any other than a very superficial mitigation, either in doctrine or practice. Here is the letter:—

“WOBURN, Dec. 8, 1868.

“MR. W. H. CLARKE. Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the First Congregationalist Church in this town, on the 2d instant, the following preamble and resolution were adopted:—

"Whereas, Brother W. H. Clarke has avowed and still holds religious doctrines which are opposed to the religion of Christ, and is guilty of a breach of covenant ; therefore

"Resolved, That he be and hereby is excommunicated from this church ; and may God have mercy on his soul !"

"E. CUTTER, *Clerk of Church.*"

This is just what the church in question would have said to Mr. Clarke if he had been convicted of murder, or theft, or any other scandalous crime implying depravation of character. In this case the offense was not of that sort ; yet, being, as much as murder or theft would be, an utter violation of their rules,—rules, be it observed, which he had accepted by becoming a member of their body,—it required the immediate infliction of the highest penalty. If he had become a murderer, they could have done no more. Becoming, as he did, a Swedenborgian, they could do no less.

Just this was his offense. Continuing to be a moral, religious, and devout person, a person desirous of spiritual improvement, and earnest in seeking the best means of attaining it, he had ventured to recognize the fact that the Swedenborgian church was better fitted to help him in this course than the Orthodox Congregational Church ; and, writing to the latter a serious and respectful statement of his convictions, his feelings, and his sense of duty in the matter, he had left this church and joined the other.

To such a person, acting from such motives, and frankly stating convictions of the weight of which he must necessarily be a better judge than any other person, the natural reply of "brethren" would be, "God speed you ! Go, and try what seems to you a better course ; and if it shall prove such, on trial, make report to us, that we also may try it."

But the system did not admit this rational and fraternal course of conduct ; the customs of the Orthodox Church did not admit it ; the traditions of the elders, of Elder John Willson, Elder John Cotton, Elder John Norton, Elder John Davenport, and their associates, did not admit it. The creed of this church, from the very fact of its being an Orthodox Church, assumes the

fact of its own essential correctness and completeness, beyond the possibility of modification through reason or evidence,—that is to say, beyond the possibility of improvement. They are in bondage to their creed. The excommunicators, as well as the excommunicated, are victims of the system; and it is the system, rather than the persons, which I am now accusing.

Every voluntary association except the Orthodox Church, recognizing its own fallibility, provides for amendments to its constitution. But this church, assuming the impossibility of any improvement in its "creed," undertakes to make its "covenant" also immutable. We and our sister churches, they take for granted, are in God's appointed way, the one *right* way, and all others are out of it. From this modest assumption comes their theory that union with them must be a union for life. When a man has once joined their church, it is settled that he is never to get out of it except in one of these three ways: death, or dismissal to a "sister" church, or excommunication. The possibility of his voluntary withdrawal, for cause, is not admitted. The possibility of his "thinking better of it" is not admitted. The possibility of his innocently or meritoriously changing his mind is not admitted. Once a member, he is assumed to be always a member, until he dies out, or is licensed out to unite with a "sister" church, or is kicked out with opprobrium as an unworthy member.

Let us see how this system works in practice.

It would be a great stretch of despotic authority to say even that a man of mature years, and seemingly fixed opinions, should never change his mind; but these churches are largely composed of *young* persons, male and female. The great majority of the accessions to them are brought in by means of "revivals," deliberate and elaborate excitements of feeling, where the people who have assembled to listen to a famous preacher are wrought upon by the most moving appeals to their consciences, their affections, their hopes and their fears, in regard both to this world and the next. When a congregation has submitted itself to the processes of an expert manipulator like Mr. Earle, the revivalist, the more impressible parts of it, the youth and the women, are like clay in the hands of the potter. He can do what he will with them.

What he chooses to do is to make them church-members, and he does it. And the decision to which they come under his skillful prompting, a decision made in the course of two hours in a crowded meeting, under the influence of active sympathy and strong excitement, is to fix them for life in an unchangeable relation to the church.

Mr. Earle is a man of consummate ability, great skill in the details of operation, and large experience in the weaknesses of human character. He knows the material he has to work upon as well as a carpenter knows soft pine. But even *his* power and skill could not produce the great effects they do produce, without a back-ground of preparation. This preparation is supplied by the regular Sunday work of the church and the ministry. The routine which they follow, week after week, has, by mere force of repetition, fixed certain ideas as truths in the minds of the children who have grown up there. It was plain to them, from their earliest years, that there were two classes of people in the congregation which they joined every Sunday: one class, young or old, were light, gay, trifling; the other class, young or old, were sober and pious. The sober and pious people were members of the church, and were going to heaven; the other class (to which they themselves belonged), if they should die before "meeting with a change," would go to hell. As these young observers grew up, it was sufficiently noticeable that the process of "meeting with a change" was not a pleasant one, and that some of the results were unpleasant. So they postponed this work, though inwardly assuming, all the time, that it was a work indispensable to their safety, and that they must come to it some time or other.

This idea of the situation having been *caught*, by contact with the Sunday surroundings of all our New-England youth, male and female, and having been rooting itself in their minds as a thing fixed and unquestionable during all those years which precede the "years of discretion," there needs only an exciting cause to bring it into active operation. This exciting cause may come to any one at any time by the death of a relative or friend, or by a sudden danger, prompting the thought, "If I had been the one to die, or if this fearful accident had taken effect, I

should now be in hell." Occurrences like these strongly suggest the idea of resorting to the church for a policy of insurance against hell; for no doubt of the existence of hell, nor of the sufficiency of church-membership to effect such insurance, has crossed the mind of the majority of these young church-goers. But, even if years pass without death or accident coming near enough to make an impression, care is taken that, every two or three years, a revival shall spread its snare for them. The preparations are made, the solemn meeting is announced, the persuasions ingrafted into the mind from childhood onward are appealed to, the example of relatives and friends makes a current which it is difficult to resist, and personal solicitation adds its powerful stimulus. Susan is told that John is going, and John is told that Susan is going, and both are strongly urged to go and hear the great revivalist *just once*. Only come in, says the spider to the fly, and then you can judge for yourself about staying, or calling again.

So they go just once; and if they escape from the arts of that consummate manager, Mr. Earle, they are more fortunate than many of their companions. But what I wish now to notice is the unsuspected consequences which are to result in future years, as long as their earthly life lasts, to those who *are* hooked and landed by Mr. Earle, and the arrest of mental development (as far as the department of religion is concerned) which is likely to take place in them.

When a man is solicited to join any other sort of society, he coolly reads the constitution and examines the conditions before putting his name to them; and if he sees a provision in the articles intended to bind him irrevocably, so that he can never afterwards sever that relation, even though time and experience should show that he was entrapped into it by false pretences, he will make very careful scrutiny before committing himself. But, in the revival business, the great art is so to impress the patient with the imperative necessity, or the immense and unspeakable advantage, of the step he is urged to take, that he shall be willing and eager to take it without conditions or scrutiny, and think himself only too happy to be *allowed* to take it. The question

with him is not, "Will it be well for me to join the church?" but, "Will the church be so kind as to receive me?"

Mr. Earle is especially eager to make his patients "commit themselves." When they *have* committed themselves, when they have first risen before the congregation to ask for prayers,—as if he were a powerful other-world lobbyist, whose influence in heaven's antechamber was all-important to them,—and when they have next walked forward and knelt down, thus saying before the world that they have joined themselves to his party, he knows that the question is settled; that they will go on in the same direction until they are booked as church-members; and that not one in a hundred will scrutinize the articles of allegiance, or think of raising a question about the fact that some things in the creed are too unreasonable to be believed, and some things in the covenant too oppressive to be consented to. He knows the boundlessness of the confidence which these innocent souls will exercise; he knows, that, in the frame of mind which his operations have produced, the perpetuity of the surrender will seem an extension of blessedness, and the "watch and care" of the brethren an absolute and unalloyed benefit. And so it is. They do regard themselves as thrice blessed in having formed this connection; they look upon Mr. Earle as the greatest of earthly benefactors; and they *may* go on for months and years, some of them through this mortal life, ignorant that there is another side to the question.

But, as a certain proportion of these young people, in the course of years, increase in wisdom as well as in stature, and discover new facts by observation, and new lessons by experience, those of them who have at the same time inquiring minds and candid minds will find that the shield *has* another side. They discover, by degrees, that the peace and blessedness which they were led to suppose would be their permanent possession in church-membership are *not* permanent, but subject to long periods of intermission; and they make the unpleasant discovery that they are not so much better for this change as they were led to expect. These two things force themselves upon the observation of *all* new members of this class of churches: but if they search for reasons, and look carefully into cause and effect,

they find that there was never any good ground for the expectations which they were led to entertain ; they find that the peace and blessedness, the "realizing sense" of their sure foundation, the "witness in themselves" that all is well with them, are not only intermittent, but are the natural results of new and strong reliance on what *seems* to be truth, equally shared by the sincere convert to Mormonism or Mohammedanism, and not in the slightest degree a test of the actual correctness of the beliefs contained in their system. They find, further, that they have been utterly deluded in supposing union with the church, and conformity to its customs, and a following-out of its rules, to be *adapted* to assist them in a truly Christian life, or to have any *tendency* to form in them a high type of religious character. Just as much as "the pomps and vanities of this world" encourage "worldliness," just so much the customs and ideas of the church encourage "other-worldliness",—a stiff formalism, a rigidity about observances, rites, and ceremonies, and, worst of all, a persuasion that the habitual practice of these things, and the establishment in themselves of a preference for them (in connection with belief in the dogmas of the creed), are the substance and essence of a religious character.

If, further, these inquirers look into critical evidence, they find the church's pretensions about the Bible and the Sabbath to be utterly unfounded ; and, if they look into moral evidence, they find it not only absurd, but blasphemous, to suppose that the true God, the Creator and Father of us all, has ever so abused his power as to make a hell of suffering *designed* to be eternal for any of his creatures.

Now, of the young men and young girls who join the church under the fervor of excited feeling, some find, in the course of a very few weeks or months, that what they have "experienced" is nothing *but* excitement of feeling ; that they retain precisely the same characters as before, and were mistaken in supposing that they had "met with a change." They are victims of an unfortunate mistake, and are utterly in a false position as church-members. Nevertheless, by the rules of the church, they are members for life.

But a much larger number than this find themselves in an

equally false position, after the lapse of years, through the operation of the causes mentioned above. When their characters reach maturity, when their powers of thought enlarge and ripen, when new acquaintances, new books, new family connections, new circumstances of whatever sort, come into their experience, it must happen to some, it does happen to many, to see that their union with the church was a blunder, subsequent examination having shown them that the reasons urged upon them to enter that relation were not truths, but enormous errors. Even if the people urging them were honest and sincere (as in most cases they are), abundant evidence now shows that the grounds for their union with the church were unsound, that the pretensions of that body have no good foundation, that many of its ideas are utterly false, that many of its observances are utterly unprofitable, and that he who follows its rules is not helped, but hindered, in the attainment of a Christian character and the effort to lead a Christian life.

Now, since these ideas, however well founded, are branded by the church as heresy, and since moral guilt is usually imputed by the church to the holder of them, and since opprobrium and evil speaking and evil surmisings are the inevitable lot of him or her who avows such persuasions, the first temptation which assails such a person is that of dishonest concealment and a course of silent external conformity. The temptation to this unworthy course directly results from the unjust claim of the church to a life-long allegiance, irrespective of any better knowledge and truer wisdom attained by its member. But for this claim, the course for such a person would be easy as well as plain; namely, frankly to say, as Mr. Clarke did, "Having come to other convictions, and considering that my duty to God and to myself requires this course, I hereby inform you of the different ideas in regard to religion which I have embraced, and respectfully withdraw from membership in your church." All here would be straightforward and sincere: the party withdrawing would gain the desired advantage; and the church might become in fact, as well as in pretense, a body of like-minded persons, dwelling together *in unity*, however deficient in soundness of doctrine.

But since it is the rule, and the settled custom, of Orthodox Churches to meet a frank and manly letter like that of Mr. Clarke with the reply, "Get out from among us with a bad name, and may God have mercy on your soul!" large numbers of their members are unwilling to arouse this tumult and meet this opprobrium; and so they stay quietly and silently in the church, suppressing their convictions, doing violence to their moral nature, hungering for such spiritual food as they know is to be found in the next street, and yet going, day after day, to receive a ration of husks at the prayer-meeting, and giving a sober weekly attendance on sermons containing much that they see to be false and pernicious.

Few things are wholly evil. Even membership in an Orthodox Church has its advantages. The person who joins it is less likely, other things being equal, to become a thief or a drunkard, or to fall into openly disreputable ways of life. The church influence undoubtedly tends to preserve a good surface of respectability in its members, and this is a material help to some persons. The *inward* influence of such membership will vary very much, according to circumstances. If the young convert consents, whether from ignorance or docility, to that arrest of mental development which the church influence tends to produce, he may pass through his whole life in serene stupidity, feeling no doubts, because he has no ideas, and firmly assured that his duty to himself is best fulfilled by a diligent reading of Scott's "Commentary," and his duty to others by tract distribution, and invitations to the Y. M. C. A. and the inquiry-meeting. If, however, he does think, and does read a various literature, religious as well as secular, and especially if he gives a serious consideration to the ideas of intelligent men and women of other churches, and ventures to hear what the ministers of those other churches have to say for themselves, the chances are that he will find more or less of his own foundation unsound. Then begins his great trial. Shall he reveal or conceal? If he imparts his new discoveries to friends in the church, the more serious and weighty their variations from the church standard, the more reproach, suspicion, and contumely are fastened on himself; and, if he takes the final step of withdrawal, his name will be altogether

cast out as evil. If, on the other hand, he avoids this tumult and scandal by stifling his convictions, and practicing a show of conformity to ideas which he sees to be false, and practices manifestly unprofitable, this is the beginning of a course of sin against God, his fellow-men, and his own soul, which he will find more difficult to break off the longer it is pursued. Yet a considerable number of the converts at every revival will have this difficult choice to make, and this fearful ordeal to pass through, as long as the church makes the arrogant claim to hold its members for life, irrespective alike of their continued consent, and of their growth beyond its narrow boundaries.

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

THE ABYSMAL FATHER.

[*Sed nunc de Profundis, Clamavi.*]

I CANNOT find thee, God,
 Though I search the holy places
 Where I hear thy feet have trod.
 Printless feet and hidden traces
 Thus elusive! Last night I thought
 To pray, Majestic Circumstance
 (Whom men call God): I sought
 From thine inspired eye one glance
 In vain. Half wild with fears, my mouth,
 Opened in search of speech,
 Was checked by deadly drouth,
 Not of mysteries, but mists,
 Wherethrough we men beseech.
 Past mist, great God, One came, past sin,
 No shadow of this death to shut him in.

CHARLES J. WOODBURY.

ANCIENT AND MODERN RADICALISM.

MANY sentences uttered twenty-five centuries ago are as fresh, modern, and vital in their application, as any springing from inspiration of the present moment. We feel this as we turn the pages of the ancients, and especially as we read the New Testament. When Jesus says all the energies of life, soul, spirit, and body, should be employed in loving God, and adds, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," and "What doth the Lord require of thee but to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly?"—justice, mercy, humility,—we see the absolute and perfect, never to be transcended either in spirit or expression. "This is the message we have heard from the beginning,—that we should love one another." Listen with devoutest, most rapt attention, until in the end you shall hear no other, no higher. There is no higher. God is highest, only because he is love. "Whoso loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love worketh no ill, doeth good to all men. "The worst I know I would do good to." This is what it will not and what it will do; its negative and positive character. In this spirit, we dwell in God, and he in us. We are one. This is fellowship. This is highest worship. This is liberty, the fathomless peace, the radiant serenity, the song of the redeemed, the bliss and glory of the re-united. Yet how few the parents who see and feel and know that this gospel is *all!* and how many, consequently, say to their children, "Be good," and then turn them over to the church, Sunday-school, Bible-class, prayer-meeting, etc., for their religious education! As if goodness, in its various forms of manifestation, were not all of religion, all of godliness, all of God; all we can have unless we aspire to transcend the Infinite.

I know this is no qualification for church-membership. If God should insist on entering any modern church as a member, on the ground of goodness *simply*, disclaiming all respect for creeds five or five hundred points, all reverence for authority, tradition,

Scripture new and old, he would be unceremoniously rejected as a dangerous fanatic and a most fearful radical. Yes: the purest inspiration of the present hour is not, cannot be, more radical than the declarations above repeated, nor more revolutionary; that is, more antagonistic to the religious institutions of the time. You dwell in love, abide there constantly. 'T is your only home. 'T is your only life, God's life. He is in you, and you in him. Are you, therefore, religious, a Christian, acceptable to any church even of the most liberal denominations? With this qualification *solely*, are you not denounced, piously, as infidel, disorganizing, and fit only for the gibbet? Why this blank and violent hostility to the most absolute declarations of the New Testament, from those who professedly esteem this book as the word of their counsel, and the unerring wisdom of God? Let them answer.

If love be not the whole of religion, the whole of piety, the whole of worship, the whole of Christianity, the whole of God, then the worse for these; and if these four letters quite express the whole of infinite wisdom, then the vast, flaunting, expensive machinery and the broad acres of the so-called religious institutions must prepare for dissolution and an oblivion of contempt. Eighteen centuries ago, who manifested the most bitter, malignant, and murderous opposition to the truest philanthropist of his or any age? Who were the vipers and serpents of that time? Who are they now? Do not think hard of the D. D.'s if you can avoid it.

J. J. LOCKE.

SHIFTING AUTHORITIES.

WE have hardly taken up a religious paper within the last six months that did not somewhere in its columns concede and lament what it was pleased to call the rapid growth of Rationalism or "Infidelity." Figures are given to show how strong the "Infidel" army has become. There is an impending crisis,—so it seems. The Roman Church awakes, not to sound alarm, but with evident glee; beholding, as it believes, the near approach of its own new triumph and universal sway. Does it conciliate the Protestant sects? No: it sweeps them all before it into the gulf of "Infidelity." It is, at least, consistent. It opens its arms to individuals, offering them all inducements to return; but it has no treaty of alliance to propose to the sects. "Back to Rome or on to destruction:" this is its uncompromising offer.

What is the secret of this confidence? Why is the Roman Church so jubilant? A Protestant looks over the field, and complacently says, "The power of Rome is broken. The Pope is on his last legs. Europe is nearly emancipated from Roman-Catholic sway. See Italy slowly moving upon the Eternal City in the name of Protestant liberty. See Austria opening the doors of freedom to all religionists alike, and in spite of the Papal power. See Germany united and Protestant. See France anything but Roman Catholic. See Spain—ah! Spain—after her long night: the Papacy disappears with the flight of Isabella. All around the earth, everywhere, the power of the Roman Church is at an end. In America it has no chance, whatever may be its pretensions. Its polity is contrary to the genius of the new world."

We have no art at painting the picture. But who has not listened to the high rhetoric of the zealous Protestant who fondly imagines that the new world is to be builded on the basis of his evangelical or liberal faith?

The Roman Church is not blind. She sees all this. Her priests are as familiar with the history of affairs in Europe as

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any Protestant can be. She understands the condition of things in America. Yet the Protestant in this country is not more jubilant than she. Why is this so? She has her eye on the future. She is old and experienced. She knows that she has the logical ground on which the church must be reared. She knows how it will turn out. She understands this "great movement" towards Protestantism. She knows that as the people tide onward they will begin to see that they are offered no rest, no logical foothold, no satisfying care of their souls. They must press on, or return. Rationalism is the logical point beyond; Rome reposes in confidence behind. She calculates that only a portion are brave or foolhardy enough to advance, and has her comfortable quarters in array for the prodigals as they come, faint and frightened, back for her blessing.

What does Protestantism offer them there at the half-way house? Only a Bible, a book containing a revelation of God. Alas! poor, distressed souls, what can they do with that? It is the blindest, most perplexing book, take it from beginning to end, ever put into the hands of man. But they are no cowards. Their pride, too, is up. They have undertaken to read for themselves; they have snatched the privilege from the church; and they are bound to dive into the depths of "revelation," each soul for itself, and come up, if possible, with the glory of God on their faces, and his blessing in their hearts. Alas the spectacle! Almost every mother's son of them comes forth from his deep pondering of the sacred mysteries with a different discovery. Hear them shout, "It is this," "It is that," "It aint," "I know," "You don't," "It is so," "You are all wrong," until, weary and disheartened, the half-way house, with its unfinished Babel-tower, is deserted.

The Bible is too blind for weak individual interpretation. It must be given up, or an authoritative teacher sought and found. What Bible Protestants want is a Church. The Bible alone is a source of contention. It stimulates strife. It breeds hard, dogmatic minds. It sucks the social life out of the people. It is a sturdy spiritual race that can endure two centuries of Bible idolatry and not become utterly swamped.

If, therefore, the Bible is not available as authority, what

shall the Bible folk do, but take it back to the Church,—which has quite as much to show for its being divinely instituted, as the Bible has for being inspired,—what shall the Bible folk do but ask the Church what the Bible saith is good for their souls? Thus only can they come together in unity, thus only find rest.

The point is, Protestant Christianity is without a church, and without any belief in a church. "The denominations," as Dr. Ewer appropriately calls them,—though, so far as his own "church" is concerned, he might as well call it also "a denomination,"—"the denominations" are of human origin: they have no authority over the individual; they are not Christ's church; *his* church would be *divine*. The Catholic is far more consistent in tracing an *institution* back to the days of Christ and the apostles, and in claiming its transmitted divine nature.

It is no wonder, then, that Protestants do not flourish in their endeavors to found churches. They undertake that which they do not believe in. They build on the human: it has no authority. True, they ape Rome in claiming authority; but logically they are cut off from the claim, because they affirm that the Bible only is inspired and divine. Who will listen to human authority? Each soul may take his private judgment, and stand by that against the world, if he choose; *logically*, he is so much more a true Protestant. In practice, the inconsistent denomination sets up its claim to some sort of discipline. It enforces its decrees if it have the force of numbers; but there is nothing spiritual in its asserted authority. Individual Protestants do not revere "the Church," or what they have ventured to call "the Church."

All are familiar with the phenomena of the breaking-up of Protestantism into new sects. It is a daily occurrence. There is no adhesive Church spirit to hold it together as one body. It flies off into new parts, and every new part separates again, and evermore, until at last we have not a Church, but every man with his own private opinion.

The world at large appears in such a transition state. Protestantism was a resting-place. That rest is broken. The silver trumpet has sounded a clear note, and there is a stir in the great camp. Rome has foreseen this time, and has long been busy

with her preparations. It is said she has bought up large tracts of land in this country, extending her purchases across the entire continent. She would be beforehand in preparing a home for wandering churchless Protestants. She will no doubt be, to a large extent, rewarded for her pains. Consistent church folk will go to her, surrender their puzzling inspired Bible, surrender their right of private judgment of things divine, and be at peace. Why should they not? Who would hinder?

That there is another alternative for those who have strength of faith enough, the facts are not wanting to show. All the sources of a new and superior civilization remain with the unchurched. In sundering their ecclesiastical ties, they have not lost aught that is essential to create the universal brotherhood, to elevate and sustain the race at the heights of intelligence and love. They have escaped the hindrance of the effete institutions which have drifted to our time, and which remain only to be at length reverently buried: another strata of the world's experience, whereon the new age will stand free to create its own.

S. H. M.

LIFE'S ERRATA.

READ blossom for brier, read leafspray for twigs,
 For thorn-tree read grape-vine, for thistles read figs,
 Read ally for alien, read weaving for snarl,
 Read concord for discord, read music for parle.

O'er blurring and misprint of Journeyman Deed
 Let Will write true emblems, so scorn not to read
 Till a new leaf turn over, and new types shall blend
 In new but old story of old but new friend.

NOTES.

MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE, in her excellent address on "The Practical Aspects of Religion," given in Horticultural Hall, said,—

Let the mistress of the house regard work as one of the hard conditions of vulgar life, she will soon find, to her astonishment, that the meanest servant in her kitchen has learned so to regard it. From the highest to the lowest, each hands down to the other the distasteful task. If performed at all, it will be by some poor drudge who is beyond remonstrance and hopeless of justice. Or let the head of any department become an idle, empty, fine gentleman, and see how soon he shall have nothing but similar gentlemen under him. But let the head of the house take pleasure in such a measure of household work as is consonant with other inevitable occupations, and a different spirit pervades the family, servants and all. From the broom and duster to the wash-tub and rolling-pin, all the implements of labor are glorified; and the results are not only to the enjoyment of some, but to the credit of all.

In the circle of American life with which you and I are most familiar, this dread and dislike of work is a feature, and an unhappy one. The fine lady in the parlor experiences a little tremor in asking the fine lady in the kitchen to do what she would not do for the world. Ah! my lady, if God works, you should work; and, if you did work, your example, more than any precept, would teach those under your guidance to work also.

The reason why we find a more religious spirit in the laborious than in the leisured classes of society lies not, as is usually supposed, in their greater ignorance or privation, but in their greater industry. It is not because they know no geology or socialogy, that they receive religious ideas with sincere and simple acceptance. It is because the divine fact of work is woven into their lives as it rarely enters the lives of those who possess wealth or pursue knowledge simply as a pleasure.

The theory of no work belongs to a low stage of moral and æsthetic culture. In its relation to present society it is full of snobism, and smells of the *parvenu*. In all heroic periods, the great work as well as the small. Spinning, weaving, the care of the household, and the nur-

ture of children, are pursuits dignified by tradition. Even washing was not held in horror in Homer's time, and the white-armed Nausica, warm with work, looked lovelier in the eyes of Ulysses than she would have appeared got up and set up in a pillory of dress, incapable of any but the passive function of being looked at.

A footman of weak mind, coming into a fortune, would probably desire his wife, sons, and daughters, to shine in finery, and to make an ostentation of idleness; but a gentleman with the average intelligence of his class should grieve at nothing so much as at the want of service or of use in any belonging to him.

Mrs. Howe had a fine opportunity for making her words of some effect; having before her on the occasion, it is said, a fair proportion of the devotees of fashionable life, people not addicted at all to what we call the drudgeries of life. We do not by any means advocate drudgery for any class; but, if it is to be done at all, we think the burden might be more equally distributed than it now is. Mrs. H. well reminds the "fine lady in the parlor" that there is a "fine lady in the kitchen." It is the oversight of this primal fact which, we doubt not, so often arrays the kitchen against the parlor. The "fine lady in the kitchen" may not always observe the proprieties of the sphere she moves in; but who has not observed the "fine lady in the parlor," heard her complainings, yet perceived that she had herself much to blame for the aggravating condition of her own domestic relations? What a price she pays for being fine! Alas! would she but simplify, simplify, simplify. Why must she keep up so grand an establishment? Verily, there must be a gospel preached to the rich! We have a sermon on hand, but only the first sentence is complete. And we begin to fear that we shall have to issue it by installments. Be that as it may, we do not mind printing that first sentence. It runs thus:—

"For the so-called rich to suppose that they are one whit better than the so-called poor, is to inflate themselves from a very insubstantial atmosphere."

Alas! who hath not seen many fine people thus inflated? Who hath not seen millions who are hungering and thirsting to be themselves inflated in a similar manner?—And *there's the rub.*

THE "secular" papers of California, or some of them, do not appear to have learned the etiquette of the East. Witness the following bold editorial from the "San Jose Mercury:"—

DR. STONE ON EARTHQUAKES.

Dr. Stone, the eminent preacher and scholar, delivered a discourse recently, in the First Congregational Church, San Francisco, on the lessons of the great earthquake. The "Alta" pronounces the discourse "most eloquent and practical." We have no doubt as to the eloquence of the discourse, for the doctor is a superior speaker; but, judging from a synopsis of the same before us, we must beg leave to question its practicability. The doctor says:—

We cannot be wrong now if we call this event a visit from God. It is not a mere natural phenomenon, in the sense of including only an obedience to natural law, and excluding a special divine purpose. That, I have urged, is the atheistical view. It dishonors the Supreme One, making his administration, even in the thunders of its power, idle, aimless, and soulless. The actual effect of the prodigy confirms the moral aspect we ascribe to it. It forces men to think of God. It declares that he is; that he is a God of power; that he is a God nigh at hand, and not afar off; that he is Lord of the elements, and arbiter of human life and destiny. It proclaims to us that we are in God's hands; that, waking and sleeping, he must keep us; and that only he can. It teaches us thus our weakness and dependence; emphasizes humility; and enjoins, we may say inspires, prayer. The effect of it God has designed. Oh! he would be recognized; he would be feared; he would be held in reverence. He would lead back this community and all this people from godlessness to godliness.

The idea that God takes such methods of frightening people into goodness—destroying millions of dollars' worth of property, not even exempting the houses erected and dedicated to his worship—presupposes a large amount of credulity on the part of Dr. Stone's hearers, if they accept that view of the case. If his theory is correct, why is it that God confines this method of admonition to certain localities of the earth's surface, especially along the mineral belts, and to regions subject to volcanoes? The people of the cities of New York, London, or Paris, are surely quite as ungodly as those of San Francisco, and yet we never heard of his forcing them to think of him by any such means. We find the effects of the recent earthquake in San Francisco much more disastrous in the region of the made lands along the city front than where the foundations are solid. In fact, buildings properly erected upon firm foundations wholly escaped injury. Accepting Dr.

Stone's theory, that the earthquake was "a visit from God," we are forced to the conclusion that God was partial in his visitation, or else that the denizens of the made lands were much more ungodly than their neighbors upon more solid foundations. The doctor proceeds:—

I am persuaded that the chief lessons of the fateful hour are moral and spiritual. There is no rebuke in it of our hope to build on this Western slope of the continent a great Pacific empire worthy of humanity's last and best days, worthy of Christ's victorious kingdom. It is a rebuke only of our audacious godlessness. It is not a warning against planting our homes on such an unquiet shore, but against the banishment of God from the midst of these homes. It is not a terror to frighten us from the great future we have seen in prophetic vision, looking out from this strand over the broad Pacific sea; but a solemn call to sanctify that future to human good and God's glory. Stay, and be at peace with God. Stay, and do God's work.

Would the doctor convey the idea, that if, as a people, we were "at peace with God," and did "God's work" according to the most approved evangelical notion of what constitutes that "work," we should cease to be visited by earthquakes? Such is the inference we naturally draw from the above. We believe, with Dr. Stone, in sanctifying the future to human good; but at the same time we would take every reasonable precaution to secure our property from destruction by earthquakes. To this end common sense would seem to dictate that we should rely more upon iron anchors than upon practical piety.

The time was, when the people looked upon the eclipses of the sun and moon as direct manifestations of God's displeasure. Science has long since taught us that those events occur strictly in conformity with natural law. That the phenomena of electricity, of earthquakes and volcanoes, are the results of natural causes, no one not wholly given over to superstition can for a moment doubt.

To our mind, Dr. Stone's "practical" discourse is anything but practical. His idea of God's special providence in such matters—that he sends us earthquakes to rebuke us for our "audacious godlessness"—is repugnant to the enlightened thought of the age. It is a sort of "rebuke" that Christian property-holders on the "made lands" of San Francisco could hardly be expected to thank him for.

WE are occasionally favored with communications upon the subject of Spiritualism similar to the one we shall give below. We are not disposed generally to print them, because they

appear to us to add little or nothing of interest to the topic they discuss. The following is above the average of most that we receive. To do the writer full justice, we give his note entire.

EDITORS OF THE RADICAL, — Allow me to express a few thoughts upon the subject of Spiritualism, a subject which, though not often mentioned in your periodical, yet molds all of its theological teachings, whether its writers are conscious of such a fact or not. This may be explained at another point if space allows. I wish here to answer the question asked by Mr. Wetherbee in his article: "Is it in conflict or in harmony with that inner sense or soul-deep, which no mental plummet has ever yet sounded?" etc. Perhaps this is not the time or place to answer that question, only to think of it.

It is now time to answer the question *if the people are ready to think of it*. If they are not ready to think of it, it would be of little use to answer; or, if each insists that the answer must *first* come from his or her standpoint in theology, it is evident that there would be about as many different answers as minds, only one of which could be the right one. If the people are not prepared to weigh the multitude of answers against each other in the scales of reason, they are not prepared to profitably think of any. The writer of this answer claims no infallibility, nor shrinks from any test or investigation in regard to his answer. If his answer be correct, the world cannot understand it too soon; if it be incorrect, no matter how soon it is exploded.

The whole Christian world is looking for a day of judgment in which the righteous will be saved, and wrong-doers be punished or destroyed. But the theologians of an early day formed misconceptions in regard to its character and work, which, with other errors, have ever been held before the people by ecclesiastic authority, and excommunication and damnation poured upon the heads of any who dared to express a different opinion. Jesus, in speaking of this day, said (Matt. xxiv. 31), "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet," etc.

In 1848, the angels began to rap around our tables for admission to a repast of reason with us; and in various ways proved their presence by means which, if upon the record of a former age, we would call miracles. In 1861, the trumpet commenced sounding in our land with a force which shook our nation to its centre.

The angels tell us there will be no more national peace and prosperity to earth's nations till governments are founded in justice and executed in righteousness. They are here to direct and aid in such a work. They tender to earth's inhabitants a form of government, — "the

stone cut out of the mountain without hands," — and promise that those nations which adopt it shall be protected by them from harm and injustice, and wrong shall be removed from their midst without further bloodshed. But, upon the other hand, those who neglect to so organize as to receive their protection must fight, as at present, in self-defense, or be crushed by the selfishness and ambition of the error and wrong that are stereotyped in the present social, religious, and civil institutions of the world.

When their purpose, as here made known, is accomplished, the world will in unanimity answer, "Spiritualism is in harmony with that inner soul which no plummet has ever yet sounded."

They, however, do not address themselves alone to the senses. They are shooting reformatory thoughts into our mental atmosphere which cause old-fogyism to tremble.

On reading the above, all will concede to its author a sincere purpose: beyond that, what is there to commend it? If one regards it as a defense of Spiritualism, how much of a case has been made out? The writer does not "shrink from notice or investigation in regard to his answer." He is willing to have it "exploded," if it can be. But, we ask, What is there to "explode"? He asserts that nearly all the "theological teachings" of THE RADICAL are molded by Spiritualism, "whether its writers are conscious of such a fact or not." This is the substance of the other communications to which we have referred. We don't know that it makes a great difference *how* our articles are molded, if they are molded, finally, into the right shape. But the assertions of those who attribute their parentage to the influences of "Spiritualism" appear to us to have no very substantial foundation.

He also assures us that "the angels tell us there will be no more national peace and prosperity to earth's nations till governments are founded on justice, and executed in righteousness." Well, suppose they do? They tell us nothing very new or startling. The saying has been reported by *men* until it has become almost trite.

He says, "They (the angels) tender to earth's inhabitants a form of government," etc.: they "promise that those nations which adopt it shall be protected by them from harm." Is it not

quite as well to say, that, if *men* establish a good government, they will thereby *protect themselves* from harm? Does the protection come from the just government that is established? or is it the gift of "angels"? Does not peace and happiness flow out of the nature of our own conduct? Could the angels prevent us, if they were so disposed, from being at peace among ourselves, after we had fulfilled, of our own accord, all the conditions of peace?

Without discussing the alleged fact of spirit communication, we ask, beyond that, setting that aside, what new revelation of any importance have Spiritualists confided to the world? "The angels," of whom the present writer speaks, "tender" nothing more than Mr. Garrison tendered, over thirty years ago, to the people of this country; than John Brown tendered nine years ago. Were they any the less angels because they were *visible*?

DAVID PLUMB writes to us as follows:—

I was much interested in the extracts from the Letter of "A Skeptic," and "Reply to the Doubter" in answer thereto, published in the November number of THE RADICAL, and agree with most that is said both in the letter and the reply. But one statement in the letter struck me as an unfair charge against the gospel of Jesus. The writer says, "Anything, they think (the unbelievers), is better than a gospel, so called, which is, in fact, no gospel or good news at all, since it consigns all but a fraction of the human race to irremediable sorrow; which exaggerates human sin, and limits divine mercy."

Where does the gospel of Jesus "consign all but a fraction of the human race to irremediable sorrow"? Jesus "took the little children up in his arms, and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Here is more than a fraction of the human race. Indeed it is computed that nearly half of the race die in infancy.

But how is it as to adults? Of a small class of inveterate sinners Christ said, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" On another occasion, and to a larger class, he said: "If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go ye cannot come." Again, it is stated that he said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." These denunciations are the most sweeping that he ever uttered, or is said to have uttered. That it is but a mere fraction of the adult human race that will escape the execution of these maledictions, the gospel nowhere

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affirms, unless it may be *inferred* from such sayings as, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat." Whether the "many" are all but a "fraction" is not affirmed. But our own observation, no doubt, shows us they are the majority, — at least, a majority of men enter the "broad road," wherever that may lead; but one can hardly see where it may lead, if not to the *gulf*. If it leads *there*, the "unbelievers" cannot very fairly, it seems to me, blame the great Teacher for inculcating as much. One would think they ought to *thank* him for it.

When Christ was interrogated, "Are there *few* that be saved?" instead of saying but a fraction of the race shall be saved, he replied, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for *many*, I say unto you, will *seek to enter in*, and shall not be able." Now the "many" here may be a good many less than "all but a fraction." Indeed, if but a fraction failed to enter in, that would be "many."

But that the gospel teaches, indirectly at least, that many of the human race will go to "destruction," or be "damned," — to use its harsher word, — is to be admitted. I do not here attempt to say whether it teaches truly or not. But, its teaching set aside, by what law will "A Skeptic" or the "unbelievers" show to a certainty that none will finally perish, or that but few, even, will reach so fatal an end? That but few are saved, in any proper sense, *before death*, is undeniable. The majority are not even conforming to the law of progress if judged by any sober standard. Is there any other law by which a human soul can be saved? Salvation is above and before: no one inherits it. *It is the perfection of human character*; and to attain it there must be self-renunciation, study, exertion, discipline, a constant growth in wisdom and virtue. You might as well say that a blubber-eating Esquimau is on the pathway to the highest plane of the exact sciences, and that he will certainly be able to comprehend and apply Kepler's Laws, determine the periods of the comets, or discover new planets, as to affirm that those who have not welcomed to their bosoms the law of rectitude, by means of which all right character is evolved, are progressing towards a state of perfection, and will certainly flame with angelic virtue, if not here, in the great hereafter. If it is admitted that there is no law of progress working in such people, but the result is *inferred* from the goodness of God, you thereby deny the freedom of the human will, and make the matter of human salvation the result of a divine capriciousness, — at least, of a divine enthusiasm, — and so, contrary to all his known ways, make him work without a law.

Has it ever occurred to the skeptics or unbelievers (and I am very much such an one myself) that a similar law to that determines the destruction of some animals, plants, and fruits, while the others come to perfection; is at work among the human race, with this difference, that the destroying element of the human being is voluntarily welcomed and fostered by him? May not the immortality, perfection, and ultimate happiness of the human being depend upon his rejection of that element of destruction, and the substitution of the conserving principle of rectitude? And, if so, that all will inevitably do it, either here or hereafter, who can show? Much might be said on the different destinies of human beings that has not been distilled from an Orthodox alerabic.

THE following paragraph is reported from a Thanksgiving sermon by an Episcopal clergyman in the City of Washington:—

Every now and then God brings the human race to a crisis. The times become grand and solemn. The soul of the race seems to vibrate to its remotest extremities. In every such crisis the real church is man's last hope. Blessed is that church which can stand in the vanguard and lead men to glory. But the church which, instead of inscribing on its banners the cross of Christ, and progress by that cross; the church which, instead of turning its heart to sympathy with all humanity, shall only busy itself with defenses for self-preservation,—will be swallowed up, and have no part or lot in God's great work at all. When the hungry hearts of human millions are gasping for the divine life, the church which shall stand wrangling over a surplice, like the soldiers over the garment of a Christ they had sacrificed, will read the outward form, and each soldier here have his part; and welcome to it he will be. But the gospel, the living Christ, the grand principles of truth and love, of human salvation, will live on without them. That is the grand significance of that fact: the truth henceforth can live *without an outer garment*.

WE are not aware that the following sonnet of Theodore Parker's, found among the returned letters of a deceased friend, has ever been published. It was sent to a young lady in return for a moss cross:—

Men looked for God, and eager sought repose
In pleasure, sought in glory and in war;
And mid antiquity's continual jar
They vainly looked for rest from mortal woes.

But still each poet of the muses wrought
 Some charmed word to soothe the mourner's breast ;
 Each priest and sage asked, too, for human rest.
 Poems and art were gleams of holiest light.
 Then came at last the noblest son of man :
 He wore a crown of thorns upon his brow ;
 With faithful life he kept his early vow ;
 He greatly taught man of the eternal plan,
 Almighty love presiding o'er the whole,
 And by his word and life gave rest unto the weary soul.

Of the cross, Mr. Parker says, Dec. 25, 1848, —

It is a good symbol of sorrow that is in every man's life ; but you will one day find that this symbol of suffering gives way to the symbol of triumph, and that the cross is not so high a symbol as the crown, the sign of eternal peace.

SAYS the "Christian Leader," —

We shall not be disputed in any quarter when we say that the right of private judgment, in matters of faith and worship, is the distinctive principle of Protestantism ; nor will any deny that the exercise of that right is the distinctive Protestant duty.

If we are to exercise our "private judgment in matters of faith and worship," why have we a "Word of God" which forestates what judgment we must form ? This *seems* like claiming a "right" which is not a right.

"But it is our right to use our private judgment to determine *what* the Word of God makes known," it is replied.

May we ask what have we left, then, but our private and fallible judgment ? What becomes of our infallible revelation ?

Alas ! Bible Protestantism is getting very lame indeed.

Men seldom get, in practice, very near their own principles. We are Protestant enough when we assail Catholicism ; but in dealing with other Protestants we are tempted to assail them on Catholic principles. Calvinism asserts private judgment in fighting the Pope : but in dealing with Methodism, Unitarianism, or Universalism, it has denied the legitimacy of the Protestant rule, and has imposed, as if by authority, its own interpretation of the Word ; bribing with the promise of heaven, and terrifying with threats

of hell, those who, in the exercise of *their* private judgments, hesitate to accept the Calvinistic scheme. — *Christian Leader*.

THE "Leader" is a Universalist paper. Calvinism hath its method of not getting "very near" its principles in practice. It "bribes" with heaven, and frightens with hell. Universalism also hath a method. It says to Mr. Connor, "We will not associate with you if you hold on to your private judgment." Whether he is thereby turned out of heaven is a delicate question.

Rev. F. D. Huntington, D. D., was a Unitarian. While such, he preached the doctrine of the Trinity; a good proof that a Unitarian may preach anything, and not be disturbed, "so long as his life is right." — *Christian Leader*.

Two things occurred to us on reading the above. First, did the Universalist "Leader" mean to approve the liberality of the Unitarians, or did it think that the Rev. F. D. Huntington *ought* to have been "disturbed" in the exercise of his private judgments? Second, since the Unitarians were so liberal to Dr. Huntington, why did they not treat Theodore Parker in a like gracious manner?

Of course we know why, when we come to consider a moment. The "Trinity" was an old affair, and preaching it shocked nobody's feelings. The absolute Unity which relegated "the Saviour," as an individual to his humanity, was a new doctrine, and the preaching of it was to most people very painful.

After all, private judgment must somehow square itself with the world in order to have the "right" heartily respected.

It is reported that the Andover professors hugely enjoyed the little story Mr. Emerson told in one of his lectures of the man who lived a while at Brook Farm, and was never known to work except on the Sabbath day. In that world whose heaven is an eternal Sabbath, —

Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest, —

This man, by virtue of his habit of Sabbath-industry, may find

his abilities in high demand. He will have no scruples against Sabbath-breaking; nor will he feel "weary," having had his quantum of rest while yet on the earth.

"INFANT DAMNATION." — A tract giving the evidence in relation to the history of this doctrine in the Orthodox Church has just been issued by the Universalist Publishing House, 37 Cornhill, Boston. It has been compiled by one of our most careful and thorough scholars, and may be relied upon as giving an authentic and fair account of the matter. It is a large twelve-page tract, neatly printed, and afforded for \$1.25 the one thousand pages, or eighty-three numbers for that sum.

If the "Orthodox Church" denies the doctrine of infant damnation *now*, is not that enough?

IN the Sunday-afternoon course at Horticultural Hall, John Weiss, Julia Ward Howe, D. A. Wasson, W. F. Potter, F. E. Abbot, have already spoken. They are to be followed by T. W. Higginson, on the 21st, on "Immortality;" and E. D. Cheney, on the 28th, on "Labor and its Relations." Mrs. Howe has been invited to speak again in the course. R. W. Emerson will speak on the 28th of March. O. B. Frothingham, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Alcott, and Mrs. Mott will be among the speakers to follow.

It is reported, that, at the close of Mr. Emerson's course of lectures at Andover, the Orthodox clergymen of that place began to preach against "Modern Infidelity."

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

CORRESPONDENCE OF GERRIT SMITH WITH ALBERT BARNES. 1868.

Argument cements misunderstanding. Explanations disguise truth. All efforts at conversion deepen intolerance and strengthen doubt. Opposing theories do not blend upon acquaintance, but diverge more widely than before. This correspondence is an evidence of the utter futility of any attempt to reconcile conflicting ideas. The liberal mind can judge of the calibre of the churchman, but the latter cannot determine his. The plainest elucidation of principles is powerless to convince the theological and mythological student: he is impregnable to truth, impervious to light. The opening letter of Gerrit Smith is a masterpiece of discriminating and exact thought, admirably adapted to the apparent needs of a tortured and perplexed mind. The elaborate manipulation which this receives, and its contemptuous rejection, is a striking evidence of the failure which such misplaced effort ever secures. The embryotic state cleaves tenaciously to its inclosure. It is doubtful kindness to pick the chicken out of its shell, and drag it prematurely into the outer world: so it is also mistaken charity to break any hard shells of dogma or prejudice or error; for these, however impenetrable to the light of pure reason, are yet a shelter to the ungrown soul. The seed remains in the dark earth until its growth frees it: why should not the soul remain in its dark abode until it germinates a living intelligence? We must all be allowed to crack our own shells and usher our unfledged faculties into the world. The life within must burst the bond,—outside pressure is destructive.

ARROW.

SPIRIT MYSTERIES EXPLAINED. By Andrew Jackson Davis. Boston: William White & Co. 1869.

The nature of spirit is under investigation in this age of ours. It is not a vague shadow encompassed in mystery, but the living cause of all that transpires. As the human spirit is an entity, a conscious individualized force, it must inevitably manifest itself by means of certain agencies and instrumentalities. The intercourse of spirit is independent of the body; it may be felt though neither brain nor muscle convey the intelligence. There are many instances of common experience in which spirits in the form have communed with others,—likewise in the form, independent of distance and other material obstacles that intervened. In conversation, the silent interchange is the sincerest and deepest. What is not said is most important. This book contains explanations of spiritual phenomena, and the various degrees and phases of mediumship. The veracity of the statements must not be impeached because the average experience offers no correlative testi-

mony. Natural action and development may be very nearly similar in many persons ; while spiritual action and development, although subject to the same grand laws in all cases, differ as widely as individual character. They are interior and unseen, therefore not to be gauged by any external sense. Spiritual insight is the key to spiritual knowledge. The work includes a fund of philosophy, both practical and profound. The author relies upon the convincing power of his reason, not upon the blind credulity of the reader. He honors skepticism, and disarms it through the persuasion of good sense and adequate proof. In this book will be found just what the reader carries to it. The scoffer will find folly ; the thinker will find sufficient aliment for his thought ; the spiritually minded a new realm to explore. One need not accept unconditionally the experience and testimony of another ; but *all* should permit the "spirit to interpret the things of the spirit," that fair judgment might be rendered. We could wish that there were fewer invectives against the church ; satirical allusions are digressive and incompatible with true dignity. "*Requiescat in pace*" is a good motto for reformers to post upon all dead institutions. "Leave the dead to bury their dead, but follow thou me."

ARROW.

THE HARVESTER ; for Gathering the Ripened Crops on every Homestead, leaving the Unripe to Mature. By a Merchant. Boston : William White & Co. 1869.

The practice of dosing is odious. There is no choice to be made of the systems adopted : spiritual dosing with its infallible specifics ; moral dosing with its virtuous prescriptions ; or intellectual drugging with its applications of facts, correspondences, and deductions. The first words of the preface give an insight into the work, and foreclose all glowing anticipations.

"The following pages are the result of a constant and laborious study into the history of the rise, progress, and introduction to the world, of the various arts and sciences, and also a comparison of the incidents connected with the experiences of men who have advanced beyond their age in the development of literature, art, religion, politics, or trade."

Family feuds are the most virulent. Propinquity engenders hostility. Identity of interest promotes strife. Resemblance is a reflection of personality which becomes utterly intolerable. The minds that are thrown off or detached through this concussion are apt to revert to the old condition : they are still bound by the ties of consanguinity, though imbittered through its experience. Thus the freethinker, whether he be Rationalist or Spiritualist, is more nearly allied to the church than he imagines. Both propose a *plan of redemption* : methods differ, that is all. Whether the method is through reason, or through the suppression of reason, is indifferent. *The soul will find its way*. It makes no plan. This book is a laborious extraction. The author takes an elaborate survey of the past ; observes its slow growth ; the obstacles raised before the progress of science and art ; the sad effects of human blindness and perversion ; the wretched way in which God's will is

done on earth. But the view is superficial, and somehow the deductions just slip the truth. No counterfeit is so dangerous as that which defies detection, neither is any fallacy so treacherous as that specious argument which inthralls the intellect, without gaining response from the spirit. Without bringing the charge of false statements against this work, — for that would be radically unjust as it is full of truisms, — I must impugn this process of deduction so universally indulged in. It is an inversion. The intellect and perceptive power of man do not bring truth to his understanding, thereby enlightening his spirit, — but the *receptivity* of the spirit attracts light: it becomes infused, quickened, and the irradiation spreads itself through the mind and all the faculties. Thus truth is an inspiration: it is spontaneous, electric, vital. *It makes itself felt*, and never essays a tedious self-introduction through labyrinthine channels. Therefore this book is heavy, lifeless. Consistent theories are like the corpses of thought bearing the form, proportions, and lineaments of the living, but lacking that essential life-force. These labored productions are unutterably wearisome to the spirit.

ARROW.

POEMS. By Augusta C. Bristol. Boston: Adams & Co. 1868.

These sweet utterances inspire that rare emotion, delight. In them is consummated the union of those straggling excellences that usually wander into the world alone, failing to find their mate: truth and beauty clasp hands, — philosophy with sentiment, vigor with grace, reform with fancy. Her imagination does not delude her, nor does the firm step of her advance crush any flowers upon the way. Her thought finds expression in music, and her feeling sways to a perfect rhythm. Her womanliness is free from puerility, and her strength is rounded to a perfect symmetry. Out of her spiritual fullness is born this sweet child of inspiration which she has clothed in loveliness. May the world welcome it! it will surely bless them. ARROW.